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ABSTRACT

This 23rd volume of "English Leadership Quarterly" contains articles on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Each issue focuses on a different theme. Articles in Volume 23 Number 1 are: "Block Scheduling and Student Achievement" (Elizabeth Howard); "Block Scheduling for ESL Classes" (Karen Grimwood); "Less Is Not More!" (Frances O'Connell); "Block Scheduling to Escape 'The Prison of Time'" (Holly Johnson); and "Realizing the Promise of Block Scheduling through Effective Staff Development" (Louann Reid). Articles in Volume 23 Number 2 are: "Using Personal Qualities of Student Teachers to Develop Effective Mentoring Relationships" (John R. Maitino); "Mentoring in a Professional Community: Voices from the Field" (Nancy Hennessy); "Mentoring through Journaling: An Adventure in Student Teaching" (Jason Pears and Jane Blystone); and "Mentoring" (Donald Shafer). Articles in Volume 23 Number 3 are: "The Economy of Curriculum Integration: Profit and Loss" (Deborah Dean; Susan Stone; Don Forney); "English: The Integrating Force" (Ronald T. Sion); "Interdisciplinary Experiences: Prospects and Pitfalls" (Rosanne Datillo Nelson); "Exercising the Challenges of Curricular Integration" (Adrian Rodgers); "Tales from the Front: Experiments with Interdisciplinary Instruction" (Laura Smith); and "Interdisciplinary Teaching: The War of the Titans?" (Michael A. Bancroft). Articles in Volume 23 Number 4 are: "Lifelong Learners: Why High School English Teachers Must First Be Scholars" (Pamela Snow and Kristin Leithiser); and "Questioning Traditional Learning: Does Computer-Based Technology Enhance Academic Performance?" (Becky L. Girard; Frank S. Mandera; Elizabeth J.C. Marchini). (NKA)

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English Leadership Quarterly, 2000-2001

Henry Kiernan, Editor

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ENGLISH LEADERSHIP
Quarterly
Conference on English Leadership

Leadership for Excellence

IN THIS ISSUE

Block Scheduling and Student Achievement

by Elizabeth Howard, Arizona State University West

Block scheduling erupted—some would say *dis*rupted—in the 1990s, accounting for as many as 40% of the high school bell schedules in the U.S. today. (See "A Short History of Block Scheduling," p. 2.) Imagine my surprise, therefore, when two calls for papers for this newsletter went almost unanswered. It seems that few people know quite what to say about block scheduling.

Much of the writing on the subject reflects perceptions of block scheduling, articulated by students, parents, and teachers. Although there are exceptions, Internet sites lean toward arguments opposing the reform, while journal articles tend to present accounts in favor of the block. Both research venues rely heavily on questionnaires and surveys completed by students and teachers as they struggle to adapt from a traditional schedule of seven 50-minute periods to a block of varying proportions. Anecdotal evidence, that which a defense lawyer would call "hearsay," also favors block scheduling, offering kudos for affective and less measurable gains: lower stress levels, fewer discipline problems, less wasted time, less record keeping, and so on.

Generally popular with teachers and students, block scheduling plays well with school culture. However, adjust the lens to focus on student achievement and your picture goes dark. Where a few studies offer student achievement test data, confounding questions about methodology arise. For example, a 1996 study offers state-mandated achievement test scores to compare two schools (one block schedule, one traditional). The block school received higher scores, but the study took place in the very first year of the test mandate so there were no previous scores for either school. Further, the authors do not say whether the schools were comparable with regard to instructional and economic variables. They rather prematurely interpret their data as reflecting the reform's positive impact on student achievement.

A couple of years ago, I scrutinized the AP mathematics student test scores of several high schools in Dallas. I had scores representing several years before and after the schools went to block scheduling. I wanted to find an answer to a straightforward question: Do students on a block schedule score comparably with those on a traditional schedule on AP mathematics tests? Ultimately, I was unable to draw any conclusions about the effects of block scheduling on AP mathematics scores because of another reform that was introduced along with block scheduling in Dallas high schools: a district-wide AP "thrust" that encouraged more students to take AP exams, inflating the pool of test takers. Back to square one.

Research on block scheduling and math student achievement, meager as it is, far outweighs the research on block scheduling and achievement in English. Here in Arizona, approximately 40% of the public comprehen-

INSIDE

Block Scheduling and Student Achievement 1
by Elizabth Howard

Block Scheduling for ESL Classes 5
by Karen Grimwood

Less Is Not More! 6
by Frances O'Connell

Block Scheduling to Escape "The Prison of Time" 7
by Holly Johnson

Realizing the Promise of Block Scheduling through Effective Staff Development 8
by Louann Reid

Call for Manuscripts 11

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A Short History of Block Scheduling

Toward the end of the 19th century, shortly after the birth of the American high school, the National Education Association's Committee of Ten (1883) defined secondary curriculum's academic subjects required for preparation for college, and new high school administrators planned an equitable time allotment for each subject. In the early years of the 20th century, the "Carnegie unit" blended high school bell schedules into a symphony of six or seven hours of classes per day.

However, critics argue that traditional scheduling is not conducive to deep reflection on the part of students, that the frenetic pace inhibits students' other opportunities for success. Juggling schedules and adapting to various teachers can be difficult for young people. Hallways and locker rooms are often crowded during the day, providing increased opportunities for discipline problems. There are fewer opportunities for teachers to reteach and retest when they deal with over 100 students every day. Moreover, teachers tend to rely almost exclusively on the lecture method to make the most of short periods of instruction. Time, that precious commodity, is wasted with starting and stopping instruction so often and passing to the next class. Record keeping is multiplied with five classes five days a week. Clearly, critics insist, a traditional schedule is a most user-unfriendly time frame.

Block Scheduling

The 1970s saw flexible scheduling, a reorganized school day that allowed a variety of class durations for a variety of class sizes, rise and quickly fall victim to roiling social and political unrest. Although experiments with flexible scheduling failed for the most part, innovative scheduling remained on the scene as a reform concept, resurfacing in some early 1980s reform literature. Offering, as it did, more "opportunity for sustained conversation between students and teacher," block scheduling was an idea gathering support.

Fanned by stinging indictments of educators' use of time in such national reports as *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and the more contemporary *Prisoners of Time: Report of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning* (1994), the growing momentum toward school restructuring has swept almost half of the nation's schools into some form of block scheduling. (See "Prisoners of Time," p. 6.)

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

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sive high schools have some form of block scheduling. (See "Traditional and Block Schedules in Arizona by County" and "Traditional and Block Schedules in Maricopa County," p. 3.) However, the testing environment in Arizona is so unstable that pre- and post-block comparisons of single schools are impossible. In the mid-1990s, millions were spent on a performance assessment achievement test, the Arizona Student Assessment Program (ASAP). However, before the test could be piloted, a new state superintendent was elected. She scrapped ASAP and began another multi-million dollar testing venture, the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS). This test covers mathematical concepts that a large number of students have not studied, so many students are expected to fail. At the elementary level, the test is

given in both English and Spanish, but at the secondary level, this graduation requirement is administered only in English. In a state where a Hispanic population forms the bedrock of the community, an English-only high-stakes test is unconscionable.

So what does all this have to do with block scheduling and its effects on student achievement? Simply this: without a stable test environment and without the ability to control for variables such as teaching methodology and socioeconomic levels of students, it is impossible to assess block scheduling and student achievement. The next best thing is to report perceptual research and anecdotal comments.

Finally, a quick summary of block scheduling plans might be timely. There are really two basic kinds of block scheduling, although each type has endless varieties. Probably the most common block schedule allows students an opportunity to take eight credits during the academic year, each course meeting every other day for about 90 minutes. The other plan, sometimes called "semestering," also allows eight credits, but offers four 90-minute classes every day each semester.

In this issue, Karen Grimwood, an ESL teacher from Carl Hayden High School in the Phoenix Union High School District offers praise for block scheduling for students whose first language is other than English. She provides some creative activities that can be completed in the longer 90-minute classes. Frances O'Connell describes her staff development efforts and some advantages of a semester block schedule in Massachusetts. Holly Johnson, former middle school teacher and professor at Texas Tech University, has experienced several incarnations of block scheduling in widely differing teaching situations, but with similar end results: tangible and intangible benefits for students *and* teachers. Her story gives us a look at how block scheduling can be customized for specific student and district needs. And finally, Louann Reid gives us an overview of block scheduling from rationale to implementation.

If you believe proponents of this reform, teachers' creative activities and student-centered classrooms are behind the burgeoning numbers of American high schools going on block scheduling. However, in the absence of all but the softest research, educators would do well to consider the words of T.S. Eliot, who observed, "Between the idea and the reality falls the shadow." On April 18, 2000, Austin Independent School District withdrew its high schools from block schedules. (See "Austin ISD News Release," p. 4.)

continued on page 5

Traditional and Block Schedules in Arizona by County*

County	Traditional	Block
Apache	4	3
Cochise	3	3
Coconino	3	4
Gila	4	1
Graham	3	2
Greenlee	3	0
LaPaz	1	1
Maricopa	34	24
Mohave	6	0
Navajo	4	4
Pima	9	7
Pinal	6	0
Santa Cruz	-	-
Yavapai	3	4
Yuma	4	0

* from a 1999 phone survey of all comprehensive high schools in Arizona

Traditional and Block Schedules in Maricopa County

District	Traditional	Block
Glendale High School District	7	2
Mesa Unified	5	0
Paradise Valley Unified	3	1
Peoria Unified	0	5
Phoenix High School District	2	6
Scottsdale Unified	4	1
Tolleson High School District	0	2

Austin ISD News Release

Teachers Will Have Two Planning/Consultation Periods for 2000–2001

SUPERINTENDENT FORGIONE MOVES FORWARD TO IMPLEMENT DISTRICTWIDE SEVEN-PERIOD SCHEDULE FOR ALL AISD SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Superintendent Pat Forgione today advised the AISD Board of Trustees that he is moving forward to implement a districtwide, seven-period course schedule for all Austin secondary schools for the start of the 2000–2001 school year in August, and announced that teachers will have two non-instructional periods each day for planning and consultation.

The change to a common seven-period schedule at all junior high/middle schools and high schools will make it unnecessary for AISD to hire approximately 44 new secondary teachers in 2000–2001 and will save the District approximately $1.8 million next year.

"Changing to seven instructional periods for all secondary students every day will bring AISD more efficiency, while continuing to deliver a comprehensive and quality education program across the District," Dr. Forgione said during a Work Session with the Board of Trustees on secondary course scheduling.

"Each course taken for 50 minutes per day over the 177 school days of the 2000–2001 school year will provide an additional 15 hours of instruction in that subject," Superintendent Forgione told Trustees. A block schedule offers students an eighth course offering in lieu of this extra time of instruction.

All of AISD's 17 junior high/middle schools, and seven of the ten current high schools* now use "block scheduling," or some version of it, where students attend classes in four 90-minute "blocks" each day, alternating between "A" and "B" days, or use an accelerated "block" schedule. Teachers are in the classroom for three "blocks" every day, and use the fourth 90-minute period for preparation and/or consultation with students and parents.

Three Austin high schools (Austin, Bowie, & McCallum) currently use the traditional course schedule in which students attend seven 50-minute classes in all of their courses every day. Teachers are in the classroom for five periods and have two hours for preparation and/or consultation.

Superintendent Forgione cited five key benefits of a common, districtwide secondary course schedule:

- Provides more instructional time per subject, per year;
- Facilitates continuing instruction for students who transfer from one school to another within AISD;
- Allows for more effective management of class size across the District;
- Improves communication among parents, students, and campuses;
- Enhances efficiency in the allocation of staff and resources.

Superintendent Forgione first announced the decision to return to a common course schedule back on March 31, with teachers teaching for six periods each day. That proposal would have prevented AISD from hiring approximately 190 secondary teachers next year and would have saved the District some $8 million.

However, earlier this week, Travis County Central Appraisal District Director Art Cory informed Superintendent Forgione and the District's Budget Review Committee that the increase in property values within AISD is nearly double the earlier estimate. Rather than an eight percent increase in property appraisals, as first estimated, Cory now projects a 14.6 percent increase in values, thus generating some $24 million in additional tax revenue for AISD.

"We've received a slight reprieve—not a parole—from the consequences of the state's 'share-the-wealth' school finance law," Superintendent Forgione said. "This additional tax revenue will allow all AISD secondary schools to operate on a common seven-period course schedule for 2000–2001 and give teachers two planning/consultation periods."

Under the "share-the-wealth" law, the higher property values mean that AISD will be required to spend nearly $93 million in 2001–2002 to equalize public school funding in Texas, not the $65 million as earlier projected.

"The budget challenges facing AISD are more difficult than before," Superintendent Forgione said. "It's just that we've received a one-year reprieve while AISD faces the daunting task of reducing expenditures by a minimum of $22 million to balance the budget in 2001–2002.

"If we can couple a common course schedule with other savings to be identified by the Budget Review Committee in general administration and other areas, as well as the recommendations proposed by Comptroller Rylander in her report, then it will be all the better for AISD. We have to set high standards for ourselves and work to meet those standards. This is true for the teaching and learning in our schools, but it also applies to our finances, our organization, and our ability to include the concerns of students, parents, teachers, principals and the community at large in our decision-making," Superintendent Forgione said.

*Does not include Garza Independence High School

Unfortunately, there is little evidence that block scheduling increases student achievement as measured by state-mandated achievement tests. And like it or not, achievement tests are currently used to judge how much students have learned, not to mention how well teachers have taught. There is a real need for student achievement data under block scheduling. It's ironic that one of the creators of the block concept, Joseph Carroll (1994) himself, warned: "Remember, nothing has happened in education until it happens to a student."

Indeed, how can we measure what has happened to students as a result of block scheduling?

Reference

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Block Scheduling for ESL Classes

by Karen Grimwood, Carl Hayden High School, Phoenix, Arizona

Once I got past the first week or so, when two periods seemed like a long time with the same group of students, I couldn't imagine how I had managed to teach without block scheduling. I can see *no* disadvantages to it.

Block scheduling's main advantage is that there is time to complete lessons; no more having to stop prematurely one day, necessitating a recap before continuing the following day. My students' attitudes have improved, owing in large part to the fact that we can do more varied and interesting projects with the extra time allowed by the block. Grades have improved also: students have a longer time to engage in sustained silent reading at the beginning of each class or to practice new constructions before leaving.

Following are just a few examples of activities we do in the longer time periods. It is wonderful to be able to complete an activity in one day.

- Student interviews, questionnaires, etc.
- Video and discussion
- Short story and discussion
- Group projects
- Scavenger hunts
- Making ice cream (or other recipes)
- Library research
- Field trips
- Guest speakers

Other advantages I've enjoyed include:

- There is more time in each class to be creative. I experiment in ways that were impossible under traditional scheduling.
- I meet fewer students in a day, allowing me to spend more time with individuals than before.
- I can spend more time on direct instruction and practicing English.
- Block scheduling offers a great venue for cooperative learning. Most ESL students come from cultural backgrounds that encourage cooperation in completing tasks. Such activities foster communication in a non-stressful environment and provide ample opportunities for every student to interact.

(See "Photo Stories" below.)

Photo Stories

Divide your class into groups of 4–6 students and give each group a disposable camera. Explain that they are going to create a comic book, and that each student in the group must play the role of one of the characters in the story. The groups decide on their stories and create a storyboard to plan the scenes. They write a paragraph describing their story and then go out to take their pictures. Many students want to take the cameras home so they can use the various rooms as part of their scenes. We allow them to do that. They may also go out onto the campus to take their pictures. Be sure to alert administration and/or security that your students will be taking pictures.

When the pictures are developed, the students must create narration and dialog to tell their story. Dialog is written in balloons, just as it is in a comic book, and pasted over the pictures to indicate the characters' words. Each group presents its story to the class when finished. If you want, you can have the other students critique the story, writing the title, a brief summary, and their opinions. Students enjoy reading each other's stories and looking at the pictures. Because they have created their own context, it is more relevant to them and they have an opportunity to have fun with the language while they use it creatively.

Less Is Not More!

by Frances O'Connell, English teacher, Ware High School, Ware, Massachusetts, and educational consultant

"Less is more" and "teacher as coach" are not only two basic tenets of block scheduling, they are also the two that kept my colleague and me fighting the change initiative that was occurring at our high school. In the last five years, we have offered our professional development workshop on implementing block scheduling to over 30 school districts, and we have had to explain our unique turnaround on this controversial issue.

We knew our school already had less money and fewer materials, so "less" education didn't seem like an improvement. Also, in a very football-centric town, "teacher as coach" may have attracted attention, but it was not how we pictured ourselves. However, after one year on the block plan, teaching three 90-minute blocks a day for one semester and starting anew in January, we discovered that our students learned *more* because they became better learners. Surprisingly, we also discovered the pleasures of coaching off the ball field!

Block scheduling is not time to do homework, it is not extra time for test-taking, and it is not time for meandering discussions during loosely planned "group work." While these things fill up the time, they do not improve education. Block scheduling can be time for students to learn to be better learners, so that each new lesson builds on the last block; concepts can then be learned, expanded upon, and applied in a more advanced manner. Block scheduling can be time for real cooperative learning to be practiced: students can develop their self-confidence and increase their knowledge through positive interactions that create shared responsibility and individual accountability.

The block can offer time to experience some exciting things that make learning an active experience for our students and us. Students take part in simulations where they become someone else. For example, at an early-American living history museum, they might assume the role of community members taking part in the poor farm debate at a town meeting. Later, they can reflect on how these issues connect to what they have learned and thought about welfare in America today. Students also have time to participate in planning and carrying out community service learning programs that allow them to learn in real-life situations. These programs, however, take careful planning to ensure that students are learning subject matter in a different way, rather than taking class time to do good works, however admirable the activities may be.

A wonderful plus that occurs through teaching in "the block" is the improvement of teacher and student morale as the classroom becomes more student-centered. As students take on responsibility for their learning and teachers have time to include different learning styles in their teaching, the classroom becomes a community where both students and teachers are working together in an emotionally safe environment.

As teachers doing professional development with other teachers, we saw some weary and worn out people who were trying to find a way to wait out what they saw as still another change in their profession, scanning retirement schedules in place of block schedules. But we also saw many people who were energized by a chance to join students in the experience of becoming lifelong learners. As the football coach of one school district whispered to me during one of our activities in a block workshop: "Oh, I get it! . . . During the block, you really have time to support and assist your students, and time to practice and help them do their best in your subject, . . . just like I do with a team."

Frances O Connell and Barbara Sullivan offer their workshop series on Block Scheduling through Educational Consulting Services, Box 362, Fiskdale, MA.

Prisoners of Time

National Education Commission on Time and Learning
Washington, DC
April, 1994

Eight Recommendations

1. Reinvent schools around learning, not time.
2. Fix the design flaw: use time in new and better ways.
3. Establish an academic day.
4. Keep schools open longer to meet the needs of children and communities.
5. Give teachers the time they need.
6. Invest in technology.
7. Develop local action plans to transform schools.
8. Share the responsibility: end the blame game.

Block Scheduling to Escape "The Prison of Time"

by Holly Johnson, College of Education, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

The National Education Commission recommends that we escape being "prisoners of time." Even after working in different types of block schedules, I have found that I still assume only one definition of block scheduling: a curricular design where students and teachers meet for two periods on alternating days. I know this is not true even of my own teaching career, but the preponderance of discussions that assume such a curricular formulation keeps me from remembering the three ways I experienced how to "reinvent school[ing] around learning, not time" (National Education Commission on Time and Learning, 1994).

Before becoming a teacher-educator, I was a middle-level teacher who worked within three types of block schedule environments. My initiation into block scheduling occurred in Botswana, Africa, where I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer at a community junior school. At the beginning of each year, teachers would meet and discuss how the students were performing in terms of English, Setswana (students' home language), Math, Science, Social Studies, and the Related Arts. After determining where students were in their learning, the teachers arranged school schedules to accommodate the support students would need in order to learn specific subjects within the parameters of the country's minimum time requirements. Time requirements for each subject varied, so students spent different amounts of time in different subjects. For instance, because teachers placed a high priority on learning English, students were required to attend eight hours of English each week. They would meet with their teacher for two hours on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and for one hour on Tuesday and Thursday. Industrial Arts was considered a necessary part of the curriculum, but not as important as English. Thus, students were required to take only four hours of the Industrial Arts each week—two hours on Tuesday and Thursday. Working as an industrial arts and math teacher in this situation, I met with my math students each day of the school week for one or two hours. My industrial arts classes, however, met only four hours a week. This type of block scheduling gave students the additional support they needed for learning particular subjects at particular times in their education.

> ***Connecting the knowledge of one class to another, or rather tearing down the barriers between the content of one class and another, I was able to use the students' strengths in one area of the language arts to address their weaknesses in another.***

In these two situations—extended amounts of time with my math classes and limited time with my industrial arts classes—I was still able to address what students needed to learn, and could immediately attend to student breakdowns or misunderstandings. I arranged my curriculum so students could concentrate on more difficult or new concepts over longer periods of time. The longer blocks of time also allowed me to spend time with the students who had difficulty or to address comprehension breakdowns. Ultimately, this type of block schedule increased my confidence in my teaching and my students' learning.

My second foray into block scheduling occurred in Kentucky. Our middle school was overcrowded and breaks between classes became battlefields and traffic jams where students had difficulty just opening their lockers. In order to meet the needs of our curriculum and our students, teachers and administrators devised block schedules that allowed for different passing times for the seven teams in our school. This blocking included an alternate day schedule where students met in their different classes for two periods every other day. This was not the extent of our scheduling, however. As teams, we were able to block class times that allowed us to concentrate on particular curricular themes. Sometimes these themes required additional time on a concept or project, and our team format allowed us to work together to reinforce the theme across the curriculum. As a result, students might find themselves in one teacher's room for a whole day completing a project or addressing information that was being introduced across the entire team. We also worked with different groups of students throughout the year, which allowed us to know students in different contexts and to observe academic strengths. Our team of 155 people created a more solidified identity where students were part of a larger community and, thus, could be understood through many ways of knowing and being.

My third experience in block scheduling did not include a team of teachers. In fact, I was the only teacher at our Arizona middle school who used a block schedule. Working with a group of eighth-grade students for reading and language arts, I used our time together to create a reading/writing workshop where students read, discussed, and wrote about their interests while also fulfilling the requirements of the district curricu-

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lum. Because the schedule allowed us to work on both reading and language arts, I was better able to connect students' reading with the writing requirements of the eighth-grade standardized test. There was not an artificial division between what the students were reading about in one class and the writing they needed to do in another.

Connecting the knowledge of one class to another, or rather tearing down the barriers between the content of one class and another, I was able to use the students' strengths in one area of the language arts to address their weaknesses in another. This block of time also allowed us to address two more of the language arts often neglected in schools—viewing and visually representing. Students could spend time critiquing the visual messages of films, commercials, and newspaper articles with others. That fulfilled their social needs as young adolescents while also addressing the critical thinking skills required in our society. And because the block schedule gave us time to connect all six of the language arts in authentic ways, students became a community of learners that transcended the walls of our classroom.

Throughout these varied experiences, one result remained constant: my students and I benefited from our extended times together. We were able to attend to crucial "teachable moments" that often take more time than the average 50-minute periods. I was able to learn about my students as young people. We could take the time to hear one another's stories at the beginning of the year, which in turn created stronger relationships more quickly. Our blocks of time together allowed us to break down the barriers between subjects, which allowed for greater transference of learning between the content areas. With block scheduling, thematic studies were more easily incorporated into my teaching, which allowed students to see the connections between subject areas, again breaking down the artificial barriers that so often accompany learning in secondary schools. Ultimately, block scheduling gave me the opportunity to teach in more "real world" ways that couldn't help but benefit my students in the future. After all, most of the employment opportunities in our nation involve sustained amounts of time on particular jobs, not the disjointed tasks that are often a part of the 50-minute periods in secondary schools.

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Realizing the Promise of Block Scheduling through Effective Staff Development

by Lonann Read, Associate Professor of English, Colorado State University, Fort Collins

In March 1999, more than 100 educators gathered in Cincinnati for "Just Going around the Block," a preconference workshop cosponsored by CEL and the Secondary Section at the NCTE Spring Conference. The questions and concerns of participants revealed that interest in block scheduling is high, as is uncertainty about how to make the change.

As block schedules proliferate in secondary schools in the United States and Canada, educators and community members hope that *this* will be the reform that increases student achievement. Teachers and students will have time to tackle topics in depth, time to focus and reflect; they will have time to think. Whether they are hopeful, curious, or just compelled by an enthusiastic administrator, faculty teams travel to schools and conferences to find the schedule that will work for them.

Yet it is increasingly evident that the success or failure of educational reforms is dependent upon the individual teacher's conceptions of curriculum and instruction, not on the configuration of the schedule. Can moving to a block schedule really result in greater achievement? I don't believe that it can without significant staff development efforts before and during the transition. Staff development can help teachers understand the possibilities and limitations of block schedules. It can also equip them with the instructional tools and support necessary to maximize the effect of the extended learning period that characterizes block schedules.

Background

The high school where I was a teacher and department chair in Colorado went to a rotating block schedule in 1989, after two years of study and planning. We implemented a four-period day with students taking seven classes over two days.

The eighth period was "Advisement," a full 90 minutes for students to make up tests, meet with teachers and counselors, attend assemblies, and so on. When I left in 1992, faculty, staff, and administrators were still working on refinements, but their schedule in 1999 closely resembled the one we instituted in 1989. In our first three years, 85 teams of teachers visited from around the state and nation; clearly, restructuring was of national interest.

Block schedules vary significantly. Besides the *rotating block* schedule we had, two other configurations are common. One is the *mixed block* where students take seven classes but have "block days" two to four days a week when they attend three or four classes; the remaining time is spent in seven-period days. The other common configuration is the *block* schedule or *4 x 4 block* with students taking four classes a day; yearlong courses are reduced to a semester. In referring to block schedules in this article, I mean any configuration of extended learning periods.

The Promise of Block Scheduling

Reasons to change from a traditional schedule arise from a desire to provide more for less—more learning with less stress, more planning and instructional time with no increase in costs, more personal contact with students with no reduction in instructional time. Faculties want to 1) make learning the constant and time the variable; 2) provide more planning time for teachers; 3) provide more focused learning opportunities for students; and 4) provide an advisement period. Sometimes the change occurs because of a central office directive or a very persuasive principal, but changes that endure and are the most effective usually come about because a significant number of faculty members support them.

About 80% of the faculty, including 90% of the English teachers at my school, was strongly in favor of the rotating block. I later learned that English language arts teachers nationally are usually positive about their block schedules. The extended time allows for reading *and* discussion, writing *and* peer conferencing, viewing *and* reflecting. Teachers who believe in active learning welcome a change that allows them to facilitate activities such as simulations and debates that were formerly difficult or impossible to schedule.

School administrators and parents see block schedules as opportunities to accelerate students. On a traditional schedule, a student who had not been in advanced math in 7th grade had no chance to work her way into calculus as a senior. A student who realized in his junior year that he needed three years of a foreign language for college was out of luck. With a block schedule that offered a one-year course in a semester, students could accelerate their program and take the advanced courses before graduation. Students who failed courses in any subject could have additional opportunities to retake them.

Teachers who believe in active learning welcome a change that allows them to facilitate activities such as simulations and debates that were formerly difficult or impossible to schedule.

After I left the high school, I wanted to better understand block scheduling and successful staff development for making such changes. I conducted three different research studies to gather anecdotal evidence from teachers, administrators, and students in six schools regarding their perceptions of the new schedule. I spoke with approximately 40 teachers and administrators between 1995 and 1998. About the same number of students filled out questionnaires. What I learned indicates that quantity and quality of staff development make a difference in participant satisfaction and the effectiveness of the change (Reid, 1995).

Perceptions of the Reality

Block schedules allow constructivist teachers to promote active learning, collaboration, and reflection. When a teacher who believes in two of Ted Sizer's principles—"less is more" and "student as worker, teacher as coach" (*Coalition*, 1988)—meets extended learning periods, instruction changes and thinking soars.

Teachers who like the extended learning periods like active learning. Maria said, "I put some of the responsibility on them that I'd been taking on before. Instead of me doing the lecture or presentation, I'm having students do more, more sharing of their writing, more small group, more sharing time."

Teachers also find that students learn in more depth. Although they are initially concerned that they are "covering" less material, they find that results stay constant or improve. Bill told me that he had taught the same writing course for sophomores in all three schools in the district and gave the same type of test every semester. He found that students on the 4 x 4 block schedule scored higher on the test than students on traditional schedules ever had in any of the three schools before they changed their schedules. Of course, this is not a controlled study, but it does provide positive impetus for change. My own experience in one class suggests that "less is more." I taught speed reading for nine weeks on both a traditional and a rotating block schedule. On the latter schedule, I saw the students about half as many days and was worried that they would not acquire the skills that previous students had by practicing their reading speed in

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class. Even though they ended up reading six novels rather than nine, their standardized pre- and post-test scores were as good or better than those of any previous class. Again, anecdotal evidence provides encouragement.

Students, administrators, and teachers like the change in school atmosphere. Halls are quieter, attendance generally improves, and disciplinary referrals decrease. A student on a rotating block schedule said, "The block schedule is less hectic—you're not running from class to class every 45 minutes. It helps to have two nights to do your homework—even though the teachers give you more. All the teachers really emphasize that one block day is really two regular days. It's really hard to miss a day of school. You miss lecture, notes, discussions, things you can't make up after school." A senior thought the schedule had helped him academically: "Well I'm not much of an English fan but having this extra time has improved my performance in English greatly. It has taken my grades over the three years from Ds to Bs."

Yet, the change does not suit everyone. Many teachers do not know what to do with a longer time period and fewer class sessions. Teachers who feel that coverage of material is their primary responsibility are frustrated. A block schedule works better for teachers who can reconceptualize the curriculum. Rather than pasting two former lesson plans together, they evaluate the importance of the material, rearranging and eliminating where necessary so that the activities in the longer periods capitalize on students' abilities to think and do, not listen and recite.

Satisfaction also varies with the discipline. Teachers of lab-type classes love the longer periods. Science and art students complete more work when set-up and cleanup time are reduced. Most English teachers like the longer periods, but Ken told me that shorter periods better suit his "performance" style. Educators who see their courses as skill-driven see disadvantages with the extended learning period. Many teachers of beginning-level math and foreign language classes feel that meeting their students every day all year is the best way to provide necessary skills reinforcement. Some see the longer periods as opportunities to teach the skills indirectly through concentrating on the concepts in their subject area. Ultimately, however, no matter what the subject matter, if the teacher lectures the whole period, students hate the change.

Effective Staff Development

The administrators and teachers in the study offered suggestions for effective staff development in making a change of this magnitude. Finding time to think is far different from filling time, something that often happens as teachers are learning how to use the extended periods.

He stressed that faculties need to show how block scheduling would be a value-added change, a means of building on what had been successful and increasing opportunities for advanced learning.

Creating a Context for Change

One important factor in satisfaction with a block schedule was how the change had come about. Not surprisingly, there was less overall satisfaction in schools that had been directed to change. The most enduring changes occurred in schools where teams of teachers and students had studied various schedules and visited other schools. Usually the faculty selected one schedule out of two or three choices.

One principal stressed the importance of preparing the community for change. Gary pointed out that many people see any change in education as a further decline in quality, a move away from "the basics" that they are familiar with. Second, many teachers and parents think change implies that what they were doing previously was ineffective. He stressed that faculties need to show how block scheduling would be a value-added change, a means of building on what had been successful and increasing opportunities for advanced learning. One means for doing that was involving all stakeholders—students, parents, community leaders, and teachers—on the visiting teams. Such teams could assure the public that this was something that has been thoroughly researched, not a spur-of-the-moment idea or an experiment.

Choice is also an essential element of the context. Most of the schools I examined were in districts with some degree of site-based decision making. Teachers were encouraged to decide what schedule would work best for them. In fact, one district had three high schools, each with different versions of a block schedule.

Implementing Changes

While administrators seemed satisfied with the study process, most thought that preparing teachers to actually change instruction for longer periods was essential. Those who had not had any inservice activities before implementing the schedule wished they had. Three of the most valuable activities cited by principals and teachers were the following:

- An inservice on the change process. One presenter asked teachers to group themselves as either dreamers, detail people, people persons, or "my way or the highway." Afterwards, they understood the needs of people in each group and could better understand and deal with the inevitable conflicts that arose in the implementation of the schedule. Another facilitator used

a formal survey and standardized charts to help people articulate their concerns and positions regarding this particular change.

- Inservices on teaching techniques such as cooperative learning strategies. Teachers who were comfortable lecturing needed to know how to employ additional methods.
- An inservice where teachers from schools already using a block schedule talked to department members about successful activities for 90-minute classes. Teachers in every school mentioned the value, the absolute necessity, of having English teachers come talk with English teachers. It was reassuring to talk with someone who had already "been there" and could offer a vision of what the change would be like.

Structural changes in schools and districts contributed to the implementation of the new schedule. Teachers in one school had persuaded central administrators to view the schedule as a three-year pilot, with evaluation questions that evolved over time. The faculty and administration of another school agreed that no other change would occur the first year of implementation so that people could concentrate on making this one innovation work. Yet another school provided a common planning period for each department the first year so that teachers could exchange ideas and solve problems.

Opportunities for teachers to educate each other built on the idea that you learn best what you have to teach. English teachers in my department prepared a collection of "snapshots," descriptions of the events and activities of selected 90-minute classes. We were able to print and distribute this collection of ten lessons to visitors and others who requested them. Administrators paid for substitute teachers so that faculty could provide inservices at other schools.

What's Left?

Although block scheduling does not work for everyone, it seems to be an innovation that can change students' achievement and satisfaction with school. Most people that I have talked with believe that their schedule does offer advantages. One student expressed the enthusiasm of many teachers and students: "I couldn't imagine school without it."

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Second Symposium

The Second Symposium on Second Language Writing will be held on September 15–16, 2000 at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA. This year's symposium explores issues in second language writing theory, research and instruction in various contexts, including K–12, basic writing, first-year composition, professional writing, writing centers, computer classrooms, foreign languages and English for academic purposes. Keynote speakers will include: George Braine, Chinese University of Hong Kong; Linda Harklau, University of Georgia; Ryuko Kubota, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and John M. Swales, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. For more information, please visit our Web site or contact Paul Kei Matsuda or Tony Silva, Department of English, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907-1356 USA; e-mail: pmatsuda@purdue.edu; URL: http://icdweb.cc.purdue.edu/~silvat/symposium/2000/.

Call for Manuscripts

Guest editor Timothy Dohrer is seeking manuscripts for the February 2001 *ELQ* issue on Best Practices in Curriculum Integration. In light of recent interest in curriculum integration and interdisciplinary curriculum (including an issue of *ELQ*), it would be useful to explore specific accounts of teachers engaging in integrated lessons, units, and courses. How are teachers and schools turning research into actual classroom practice? What pitfalls should school leaders be aware of in implementing integrated or interdisciplinary curricula? In what ways does English connect with a variety of disciplines or topics? How does integration effect coverage, especially in regard to literature? How are students reacting to our interdisciplinary and integrated curriculum efforts?

Send manuscripts by **October 15, 2000,** to:

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Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

February 2001 (deadline October 15, 2000)
Best Practices in Curriculum Integration
Guest Editor: Timothy Dohrer
(See call, p. 11)

April 2001 (deadline December 30, 2000)
Teachers as Scholars

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Henry Kiernan, Editor, *English Leadership Quarterly*, West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930; phone 908-879-6404, ext. 281; fax 908-879-8861; e-mail kiernan@nac.net. ●

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IN THIS ISSUE

Mentoring New Leaders

Henry Kiernan, editor

Those who have torches will
pass them on to others.

Plato

Two years ago, the Conference on English Leadership celebrated its 30th anniversary, and a special issue of the *Quarterly* focusing on the need for mentoring and developing new leaders was published to honor the occasion (October, 1998). As this issue is working through final production, school districts throughout the country are encountering a shortage of teachers and administrators for key positions. This need for personnel is far beyond the initial alarms registered in 1998 when forecasters predicted a shortage based upon increasing enrollments and the aging of the teacher population.

Some blame the heightened intensity of the current shortage on a vigorous economy that is luring teachers and administrators into *dot.com* jobs or early retirement. Yet it is difficult to generalize about causes when sifting through pages of classified ads placed in state newspapers by districts still searching for educators. In some regions, sign-up bonuses are advertised to attract teachers from other states. Within my own state of New Jersey, it is common knowledge that some school districts are luring teachers from other schools with unadvertised bonuses in order to have a full staff in place for the fall.

However, the real work begins when new teachers and administrators enter a school and begin to immerse themselves in a new culture. It is the responsibility of that school to design a mentoring program that will ensure a smooth transition for new staff as well as to develop a program of training mentors with the skills, qualities, and abilities necessary to meet the needs of new teachers and administrators. This is no easy task, especially in some schools that are experiencing or projecting high staff turnover rates.

Little research exists to support best practices in mentoring. While there are certainly several researched studies on the needs of teacher candidates and student teachers, less is known about the ever-changing needs of new teachers during their first, second, and third years of teaching. Even less is known about the needs of experienced teachers who change schools as they deal with a new environment and culture.

The authors in this issue address several key issues involved with the mentor–mentee relationship. The dialogue for collaborative learning must be fostered, and, we hope, examples of successful collaborative programs between university and precollegiate teachers will be encouraged. ●

INSIDE

Using Personal Qualities of Student Teachers to Develop Effective Mentoring Relationships 2
by John R. Mattino

Mentoring in a Professional Community: Voices from the Field 6
by Nancy Hennessy

Mentoring through Journaling: An Adventure in Student Teaching 9
by Jason Pears and Jane Blystone

Mentoring 11
by Donald Shafer

2000 CEL Election Slate 14

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Using Personal Qualities of Student Teachers to Develop Effective Mentoring Relationships

by John R. Mautino, California Polytechnic University, Pomona, California

At 11:30 a.m., four weeks after the quarter has begun, and 60 minutes before she is to teach her eighth-grade ESL class, Sylvia is told by her cooperating teacher and the school principal that there are problems with her work at the school. She is not showing much initiative, her dress and personal hygiene are unsatisfactory, and her teaching is "over the heads of your ESL students." It is a difficult, at times excruciatingly painful meeting, one that I attend as her university supervisor.

What quickly emerges is a complicated situation in which perceptions differ sharply; with only five weeks remaining in the quarter, the cooperating teacher is clearly overextended in her responsibilities and Sylvia is emotionally unprepared for such harsh criticism.

The resolution of Sylvia's problem came slowly, somewhat agonizingly over the next eight weeks, and got me thinking about the business of mentoring student teachers. Tidy resolutions don't always emerge from complicated human problems, and supervision models applauded in respected journals sometimes collide with the hard realities of classroom teaching, offering little guidance. What I want to do here is sketch brief portraits of three student teachers and reflect on the ways in which their personal qualities helped to shape each of those mentoring relationships.

Tidy resolutions don't always emerge from complicated human problems, and supervision models applauded in respected journals sometimes collide with the hard realities of classroom teaching, offering little guidance.

The moment of decision about what I will do comes most often when I plan the observation or meeting with a student teacher. I ask myself questions about her or him to determine appropriate strategies and relating behaviors. Is she motivated to deal with the situation? Does she have confidence to change or adjust her teaching? Does he understand his strengths and weaknesses? Does he learn from his own experience? Sylvia's problems, described above, offer an example.

An especially helpful resource for understanding the mentoring process is Portner's *Mentoring New Teachers* (1998). This short book provides a range of insights on relating behaviors, pre- and post-conference communication, developing trust, and effective feedback strategies. In addition, I have adopted Glickman and Ross-Gordon's (1994) style of supervision, including Direct, Collaborative, and Non-Direct, in my own practices. The examples that follow help to demonstrate the differences in approach.

Directive Mentoring: Fixing Problems

When we met directly after that painful meeting to discuss the situation, I said we had two options—find another school or continue at the same school with the obvious advantages and disadvantages. Sylvia wished to stay, so I suggested we find a second cooperating teacher, one who provided a more accommodating environment and accepting attitude.

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

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We found one, but the more important issue, the criticisms, still needed airing.

Some context on Sylvia is required. I had known her for two years through classes and advising. She had worked hard, earning a bachelor's degree in English in a rigorous program, all the while supporting herself and her daughter. She was determined to meet her goals, including a teaching credential, a job, and the financial independence that would follow. At the same time, however, she occasionally appeared embattled in personal relationships that she did not understand, and she was given to doubt and depression.

When we discussed the criticisms, Sylvia could find no basis for any of the comments in either her teaching or personal behavior. I suspected interpersonal conflict with the cooperating teacher, and believed Sylvia was emotionally ill equipped to understand or resolve the problem. Consequently, I suggested we write up a plan to address each criticism and talk weekly after the observations about progress in those areas. The plan involved three elements: share with the first cooperating teacher specific, agreed-upon goals as a guide for daily teaching (my suggestion); emulate the dress and appearance of teachers at the school (Sylvia's idea); and simplify ESL lessons with a breakdown of tasks and strategies (cooperating teacher's suggestions).

As it turned out, Sylvia did the best she could. She taught scripted, if uninspired, ESL lessons; she dressed with a more colorful and professional appearance, which seemed to give her a certain pride; and she made measurable, though modest, progress in her teaching under the guidance of the second cooperating teacher. Eventually, she found full-time employment in teaching.

What Sylvia did not, and probably could not do, given her limitations, was utilize problem-solving strategies to discover and develop a full range of teaching skills. In his very helpful book, *Mentoring New Teachers*, Hal Portner suggests that supervisors and mentors must, with unmotivated or unwilling teachers, focus on behaviors that "fix" specific problems (p. 60). I very consciously chose to use a highly "directive" approach in my relationship with Sylvia, sensing in her limited self-awareness and interpersonal skills an inability (or unwillingness) to evaluate her teaching or even use constructive suggestions. I could only hope that Sylvia would begin to discover in this very prescriptive process a method for developing viable teaching strategies.

We developed a succession of strategies for each area that Andrea used in class over the coming weeks, and what emerged was a continuing discussion of the relative merit of these approaches.

Collaborative Mentoring: Solving Problems in Tandem

Andrea walks briskly back and forth in the front of the classroom, firing questions at random students, following up when an answer demands clarification, her eyes everywhere at once. The questions, and especially the follow-up questions, reveal her command of the subject—Act I of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*—and a sense of the interpersonal dynamics of this classroom.

Andrea's voice is sharp, sometimes insistent, always driven by conviction, enthusiasm, and a sense of purpose. As the lesson unfolds, with students alternately reading aloud from Act I and responding to questions on meaning and tone, I have a strong impression of a motivated teacher with a dramatic presence, a sense of timing, who knows where she is going.

In contrast to my discussions with Sylvia, my post-lesson conferences (and e-mail chats) with Andrea quickly evolve into collaborative conversations about the lesson. For example, I used with both student teachers an observation technique called the "anecdotal record," in which you write down in short sentences a description of a particular student. Each sentence becomes a kind of discrete observation that allows one to get a sense of what particular students are doing, and of the temporal flow of the classroom (Acheson, p. 120).

While Sylvia would rarely interpret the meaning of the anecdotal record, Andrea offered quick takes on any number of these short observations. For example, I wrote, "Jesse (a female student) turns her eyes back to the instructional handout when you say, 'You in or out, Jesse?'" and Andrea said in response to my anecdotal record, "I have to keep reminding Jesse and her little coterie of associates to stay on task." When we reviewed a series of such anecdotal observations, recorded over several lessons, I would ask if there were one or two patterns that might help us focus on "important moments" in her teaching, moments which, if we thought about them long enough, might lead to the most significant positive changes in instructional practice. Andrea identified class management and putting more responsibility for learning on the shoulders of the students.

We developed a succession of strategies for each area that Andrea used in class over the coming weeks, and what emerged was a continuing discussion of the relative merit of these approaches. For example, Andrea began to set clear behavioral limits, apply them in class, and note improved time on task among students. I asked in one observation, when a student mimicked her disciplinary approach, what she thought her "sharp voice" and "abrupt manner" telegraphed to students. "Does it

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serve as a cautionary warning, a highlighting of the moment, or what? What will be its effect on behavior when it is done over several weeks?" She was not sure, but did not see in the next three weeks a letting up of mimicry or other occasional manifestations of disrespect.

We finally developed a very concrete plan for evaluating student behavior and appropriate responses to it. I suggested that Andrea do the following for a specific class:

1. visualize all the acceptable behaviors you want, and write them down;
2. observe and record unacceptable behaviors;
3. develop and apply specific strategies to eliminate unacceptable behaviors;
4. reevaluate each strategy after one week, and revise or adopt a new strategy.

Over 13 weeks, Andrea used a series of strategies, including behavioral and instructional approaches (from adopting a reserved demeanor to overplanning lessons), that slowly improved classroom behavior, but did not eliminate all or most unacceptable conduct.

In the end, Andrea's capacity for self-critique and her willingness to experiment allowed for collaborative mentoring where we identified problems and developed a variety of strategies to solve those problems. Andrea's own evaluation of this collaborative relationship came in an e-mail composed a year after her student teaching ended, when she had been teaching full time for about 7 months. In part, she wrote, "I think I benefited most by you staying after the observation to discuss my strong/weak points. Keeping track of the time on your observation allowed me to see how well paced the lessons were. As for our weekly journal entry, it was nice to rant and rave as well as take pride in the successes."

My own notes identify "marker periods of discovery and growth in [Andrea's] teaching," both through our collaborative work (the step 4 visualization strategy discussed above) and through my more traditional evaluation of her teaching ("set specific limits and enforce them . . ."). Arthur Blumberg and Edmund Amidon offer possible reasons for such growth in a review of teacher perceptions of supervision. "The researchers made an interesting discovery: teachers felt they learned most about themselves, as teachers and as individuals, from conferences high in indirect and direct supervision" (Acheson & Gall, p. 23). It may be that the collaboration (indirect supervision), which teaches problem solving, helps teachers to evaluate their instructional practices in a more objective light and to use critical evaluation (direct supervision) to their advantage. In any case, Andrea benefited from a mentoring style that included collaborative as well as directive elements.

It may be that the collaboration (indirect supervision), which teaches problem solving, helps teachers to evaluate their instructional practices in a more objective light and to use critical evaluation (direct supervision) to their advantage.

Non-Direct Mentoring: Facilitating Self-Reliance

The first classroom observation ends; Patti announces we cannot conference now, so I ask her to e-mail me a response to my written notes, and I will call her the next day. Her e-mail says, among other things, that she will devise a way of calling on more students because she noticed from my observation that she called on a small number of students, some of them repeatedly. When I call on the phone, she is not available.

Seven days later, the second observation takes place, and I write two comments in my notes. "One: You called on 32 students in the first 35 minutes, and actually called on each one at least once, it seemed. Impressive. Two: What did you like the best that happened during the class period, and what would you change (and how)?"

Though I had assigned another supervisor to observe Patti during the semester, I visited her twice because she was a member of the seminar on student teaching I directed. She was clearly eager for my visits and for every bit of "criticism," as she called it, that I might offer. She was an emergency credential teacher, which meant she was teaching a full load with no training or extra observation or advising from the school site where she worked.

During the first visit, I used a verbal flow observational strategy, which records who is talking and to whom and identifies categories of verbal interaction (i.e., teacher question, student answer, teacher praise, student question, etc.). This technique gives an objective record of the verbal nature of the lesson in many of its particularities (Acheson, p. 105). Patti had noticed, without my prompting since we could not meet after the lesson, that she only called on 8 students, some of them repeatedly. Before my next visit, she had experimented with two ways of increasing the number of students who answer, settling on a technique of using individualized name cards to guarantee that she called on most, if not all, of her students. During the first half of the second visit, the discussion unfolded as a fast-paced exploration of a short story, its plot, and significant themes. The use of the cards greatly increased the number of participants and sharpened the attention of almost all class members.

In the second observation, I recorded "directions and structuring statements" as close to verbatim as possible, noting the time given and the context in which they were deliv-

ered so their relation to the class lesson would be evident (Acheson, p. 93). Typical of Patti's structuring statements were the following, given directly after a minilesson in which effective dialogue and correct use of quotations was taught: "Now we will do a practice exercise where you will be asked to revise paragraphs and add quotation marks." (She asks several questions of Ginny, Tom, and Jose, checking for understanding before she moves on.) "You take words from the paragraph to make dialogue. Remember, you copy and revise it, adding the quotes where they are needed." Students then worked individually; Patti checked their progress and concluded the lesson with student examples on the overhead.

When we met after the lesson, I asked Patti how she felt about student learning during the lesson. She said, "I felt they had a grasp of how quotation marks show who is speaking, but I wondered whether I should have intermittently put individual student examples on the overhead throughout the lesson, and discussed them one at a time, instead of doing a whole group all at once. What did you think?" I said that she should assess their work the next day to verify what they actually learned, but also thought the idea of "intermittent" examples with discussion could only help to reinforce learning.

Patti was clearly the best equipped (of the three student teachers discussed) to use my observations as a springboard for analyzing her lessons and teaching strategies. She used my first observation (without a post-lesson conference) to adopt a question-asking strategy that immediately improved engagement and on-task behavior among students. And, after the second observation, she was able to engage in a kind of reflective questioning in which she stood outside herself to both critique the lesson and offer alternative approaches of high quality (Lee, pp. 16–21).

In a curious way, the new or student teacher governs the mentoring relationship much as an individual's personality shapes the development of personal relationships.

Conclusions

In a curious way, the new or student teacher governs the mentoring relationship much as an individual's personality shapes the development of personal relationships. While the mentor can be a teacher, a sponsor, a guide, he or she must also understand the student teacher's capacities and take them into account in developing the relationship. I have found that when a student teacher's motivation and ability to address problems is limited, I need to spend more time nurturing trust and offering (and reinforcing) prescriptive strategies for fixing problems. On the other hand, motivated and skilled student teachers can assume greater responsibility for their own growth and development, allowing me to guide that growth through collaborative problem solving and reflective questioning. ●

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Call for Manuscripts

ELQ is seeking manuscripts for the August 2001 issue on "Matters of Thinking." "Because of the importance of attitudes, ability to train thought is not achieved merely by knowledge of the best forms of thought. Moreover, there are no set exercises in correct thinking whose repeated performance will cause one to be a good thinker. . . . Knowledge of the methods alone will not suffice; there must be the desire, the will to employ them. This desire is an affair of personal disposition" (Dewey, 1933, pp. 29-30). Most of us agree that school should be a "place for thinking." This leads to many questions concerning how we teach and learn "ways of knowing" and "habits of mind." How important is a personal disposition toward thinking? Can we teach thinking through modeling good thinking? What is good thinking, anyway? How can we encourage more thinking in classrooms? How can we raise the level of thinking in classrooms? Where could teachers find specific lessons on thinking to implement? What strategies can we share to promote or improve higher order thinking? Is there really a problem with thinking in classrooms? What recent publications discuss or suggest limited or extended thinking in our schools? What evidence can we show that we maintain a high level of thinking in courses we teach? Have you read any good books lately on thinking in our schools? (*Deadline: June 15, 2001*)

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Mentoring in a Professional Community: Voices from the Field

by Nancy Hennessy, West Morris Regional High School District, Chester, New Jersey

How does a regional high school district address the needs of new staff members and facilitate their membership in its professional community? The response seems fairly obvious: create an induction process that includes both new teacher training and mentoring programs. In fact, over 30 states, including New Jersey, have mandated support programs with this purpose (Portner, 1999, p. 3). The need for such structures is clear and well documented. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996), up to one-third of new teachers leave in the first three years. This is an alarming statistic in light of reports that we will need two million teachers over the next ten years as the majority of educators in schools today are at or nearing retirement age. There is also increasing concern about the quality of teacher candidates. In Margaret Wang's words, "Although some fear that there will be insufficient numbers of teachers in the next decade, the most serious problem may be the preparedness and quality of the present and prospective teaching force" (p. 1). Given the impending shortage of candidates and the knowledge that what teachers know makes the difference in improved student learning (National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 1996), there is little doubt about the necessity of a support system focused on attainment of professional competency.

However, there is a second, perhaps less obvious response to this question, namely collaboration: a collaborative process is the most meaningful vehicle for implementing an effective program. For the West Morris Regional High School District, a commitment to professional community was instrumental in providing a framework for collaboration as evidenced in our design process and the ongoing evaluation of our program.

At this point, some explanation of how the concept of professional community translates into district practices would be informative. A literature review yields several descriptors of such communities that are identifiable in our culture, including: opportunity to discuss ideas and perspectives collectively, development of shared norms and values, and a willingness to be collectively responsible for initiatives that ultimately lead to excellence in teaching and learning. Additionally, staff development is valued, differentiated opportunities for growth are provided, and there is a norm of continuous growth and contribution. As a result of a collaborative workplace that encourages communication and nurtures productive group work, diverse voices have had the opportunity to contribute to and shape our mentoring program. While several states have well-defined and elaborate mentoring systems that serve as models (e.g., California Beginning Teacher Model), New Jersey provides only a basic framework that outlines roles and responsibilities, leaving program specifics to the local school district. We viewed this as a welcome opportunity for our "voices" to create an implementation and evaluation design that reflected best practice and that aligned with our district's mission, goals, and perhaps most importantly, our context—that of a regional high school district.

Of note is the fact that one of their goals called for creating a climate of collegiality, thus creating the means for listening to the "voices" of our new staff members.

Who, then, are the voices that contributed to an ever-evolving program, and how did the district capture their collective thinking? To address this question, it is best to review the phases of development and implementation over the last three years. In 1997, we recognized for various reasons that the informal program in place, while well intentioned, lacked direction and substance. Almost simultaneously, the district was the recipient of a Goals 2000 grant that provided resources for addressing these concerns and allowed us to invite interested staff members to participate as members of a newly formed "Mentoring Team." These voices were instrumental in creating the district's first formal model, including written guidelines, for mentoring. Their work was the result of training, research, and many hours of discussion that led to a definition of purpose, goals, and characteristics of effective mentors. They also defined guidelines for mentor selection and program evaluation.

The team, comprised of one administrator and 14 teachers, committed to ongoing involvement in the program, including serving as mentors, facilitators of future training, and program evaluators. They determined that our purpose should be to provide a supportive learning environment in which new teachers could gain confidence in instructional competencies and increase professional knowledge. Of note is the fact that one of their goals called for creating a climate of collegiality, thus creating the means for listening to the "voices" of our new

staff members. It is this group that recommended new teachers be assigned mentors from the same discipline as their own and, when possible, that they teach the same courses. In a high school setting, this is particularly critical because of the focus on deep content knowledge as well as pedagogy. They also knew that shared planning periods and proximity would facilitate communication; they continue to advocate for these conditions, which are always difficult to attain.

Building (through an application process) a cadre of trained mentors who have the capacity to serve was deemed essential to the success of the program. The team also acknowledged the necessity of training and outlined essential components. In 1998, the first mentor training session in the district was designed and delivered by two of the team members in conjunction with the Staff Developer. It addressed mentor roles and responsibilities, needs of new teachers, and development of effective relationships and support strategies. Both format and content have been revised over the last two years based on mentor and new teacher feedback. The team has also been instrumental in the development of new teacher training. Last year, the initial training session for new teachers and mentors was scheduled simultaneously so that they could participate together in a shared session focused on a common language and understanding of district expectations, teaching standards, and the professional development portfolio required of all non-tenured teachers. Many of these team members continue to serve as mentors, others deliver training, and all participate in the end-of-the-year celebration luncheon for mentors and new teachers.

A second set of voices that has been instrumental in the evolution of the district program is comprised of the mentors and new teachers. Their collective experiences have been gathered for the past two years through discussion and written feedback. Luncheon meetings throughout the school year provide opportunities for professional conversations about what's worked, what's next, what's on their minds, and what to do when. In this way, we are able to assess administratively what supports and resources new teachers and mentors need at that moment in time. We've also learned the value of both shared and separate meetings that allow for an exchange of information specific to each group's issues and concerns. Just as important, we've worked at respecting the confidential nature of the mentor/new teacher relationship. When information is shared with administrators, it is used to support the individual involved so that they can meet expectations. Similarly, administrators sometimes share concerns and/or areas of need observed so that mentors can work with new teachers in a meaningful manner. For the last two years, our new teachers and mentors have responded to a series of questions directly related to their experiences. Their answers have been a source of both validation of our efforts and direction for improvement.

We asked mentors how they build collegial relationships with the new staff. They stressed the importance of open and honest communication, confidentiality, and acceptance.

Trust and respect are the cornerstones of a professional learning community. Knowing these factors are key to successful mentoring, we asked mentors how they build collegial relationships with the new staff. They stressed the importance of open and honest communication, confidentiality, and acceptance. Their responses conveyed their ability to view the beginning teacher as a developing person and professional. James Rowley tells us, "accepting mentors do not judge or reject mentees as poorly prepared, overconfident, naive, or defensive" (Rowley, 1999, p. 20). Our mentors are able to identify strengths, and they see weaknesses as "challenges." They advise their successors not to *assume* what their protegees need. They also caution others not to forget about the importance of socializing with new teachers whenever possible, such as over coffee or lunch. We ask mentors to make contact with their new teachers during the summer for just this purpose.

The mentors also reported that they find the district guidelines, written information on mentoring, training, and network meetings as valuable sources of information for understanding their roles and responsibilities. Another valuable resource for mentors is a needs assessment that new teachers complete and are encouraged to share as a focal point for discussion. Equally valuable suggestions include helping even when it's not solicited and rejecting the idea that their mentee should be a "clone" of themselves.

One unique feature of our program is that experienced teachers who are new to the school are also paired with a mentor. Dr. Thomas McGreal, who worked with us on a redesign of our supervision/evaluation system, reminded us that each school's culture is different, and if integrating new staff members into our professional community is a priority, then all new members need an opportunity to learn about district/school norms, practices, and procedures. This year's questionnaire asked about the differences between mentoring experienced versus inexperienced teachers. The responses indicate that there are more commonalities than differences. Both experienced and inexperienced teachers need encouragement and opportunities for sharing and reflection. The primary difference, of course, surfaces in the areas of content and pedagogy; therefore, discus-

sion topics and peer coaching differ in terms of depth. Our mentors endorse the rationale for engaging in this process, noting that participation often results in a professional transformation for the experienced teacher. Joellen Killion studied the benefits for experienced teachers and reported that, "Adults in mid- to late careers, typically in the 35–50 age bracket, have the need to find meaningful ways to feel valued, make a significant commitment to the next generation, and share their accumulated experiences. They also feel a need for personal renewal and revival" (Killion, 1990, p. 33).

Our mentors tell us that this process prompts them to reexamine their own practices and update professional strategies based on insights, and leads to further understanding of the complexity of teaching and learning. On an individual level, mentors reported that they have made new friends, learned how to help someone "shine," and reveled in watching the growth of their colleague. Time, of course, remains the greatest challenge.

Mentors' responses also provide direction for the future, such as an increased focus on peer coaching. This year, members of the team will develop and implement a training session for experienced mentors to accommodate this recommendation.

The other voices within this group are the new teachers. They responded to similar questions and, not surprisingly, their responses support and in some instances extend their mentors' ideas. What is very evident from their comments is the importance of having a mentor who celebrates accomplishments; provides positive, constructive feedback; takes time to talk regularly; shares resources; and "listens, listens, listens" with empathy. Mentors can take pride in the fact that new teachers indicated needs were fulfilled and, most important, they felt they had "someone to go to with questions (silly or not) or to talk to when feeling a 'bit down.' Inherent in mentoring is both teaching and learning. Some lessons addressed getting organized, setting high standards for student performance, working with parents and peers, and implementing instructional design and assessment strategies. One new teacher's response to the question about what important learning was gained from his/her mentor was, "students are the most important thing in my job."

What is very evident from their comments is the importance of having a mentor who celebrates accomplishments; provides positive, constructive feedback; takes time to talk regularly; shares resources; and "listens, listens, listens" with empathy.

The new teachers have also given us direction on how to refine both new teacher and mentor programs. The challenges they identified are common to most new teachers, such as classroom and time management, discipline, planning, curriculum, and adapting to the school's culture. Of note are their comments on understanding and fulfilling expectations of the "learning inquiry" (as required by the Professional Development Portfolio) and working with difficult students. There is a common thread among their responses that reinforces the need to attend to emotional and psychological support that goes beyond policies, practices, and procedures.

Another voice, namely my own, has also contributed to the shaping of our system for new staff. Like many other administrators who are called upon for leadership in this area, I have worked at creating the structure and process, allocating the resources, and identifying the participants. While this is a critical role, it is the collaborative work of the mentor team, mentors, and new teachers that has resulted in effective design and implementation. Louis, Marks, and Kruse (1996) have identified common elements of professional community:

- shared norms and values
- collective focus on student learning
- collaboration
- deprivatized practice
- reflective dialogue

Our collective actions, as we engage in process and practice connected to this program, are representative of these elements. Our challenge is to sustain our ability to create opportunities to listen to the voices involved in district initiatives. Our pride in our commitment to professional community is appropriate, since we know that the end result of collaborative workplaces is a collective sense of responsibility for making a difference in students' lives. ●

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Mentoring through Journaling: An Adventure in Student Teaching

by Jason Pears, Meadville, Pennsylvania, and Jane Blystone, North East High School, North East, Pennsylvania

Jason's Story

Walking into North East High School for my first day of student teaching was a nerve-racking experience. Although I was very nervous, I was also very excited. I could not wait to see Dr. Blystone, my cooperating teacher, and meet the classes I would teach. I felt like my mind was an empty cup ready and willing to be filled with pedagogical information. I was humbled and felt like the blind man on the street corner shaking my almost empty methodological cup in front of the mentors I would meet, begging for any bit of knowledge they could give me. I figured that by the time I finished student teaching, I would be wealthy with the skills that are needed to be an awesome teacher. My previous teaching experiences had taught me one resounding thing: I really didn't know anything. I was eager to start learning.

My first day was not what I expected. That cup of mine had already been filled at such a pace that it was like I held it beneath a waterfall, and I still had 170 days left before I finished. I soon found that my days were packed so full of information that it was all I could do to keep track of the chaos I was quickly becoming responsible for. I began creating to-do lists that were miles long, and although I had never encountered them before, Post-It™ notes became intimate friends. As soon as I returned home, I would spend about an hour in reflection, attempting to capture everything that went on in my day so I wouldn't miss anything. I didn't know how I could possibly keep track of everything and still learn in the process.

It was during this precious hour that I began to appreciate the benefits of the teaching journal Dr. Blystone wanted me to keep. In it, I could not only make to-do lists for myself, but I could address issues and ask questions that I knew would receive a response. Often our schedules were so busy during the school day that we would barely have the opportunity to talk. The teaching journal became a convenient way to correspond. When I got home from school and started to reflect upon my day, having the journal made it seem like Dr. Blystone was always there ready to listen to anything I had to say or respond to any questions I asked.

After 27 years of teaching, I can echo Jason's idea that I still have so much to learn about this art of teaching. Together we learned and relearned some wonderful lessons by writing in this journal.

Jane's Story

So, where do I start? I met my new student teacher several weeks before the actual day he was to arrive on our campus. At the time, I did not tell him that I would ask him to participate in a professional journaling project to document his experience in student teaching. I had used the process previously with student teachers from several universities in the area, and it had worked very well. The new teacher was able to spend reflective time each day writing questions to me, and in turn, I could share my reflections about his or her day as a teacher based on my observations.

Starting the journal is simple. We used a top-bound spiral notebook that fit well in our overpacked bookbags. I handed Jason the journal, in which I had inscribed a welcoming statement, at the end of his first day of student teaching. I asked him to write down any questions he had generated during the day and also to list some goals he had for student teaching. When he handed me the journal the next day, I noticed that he had filled almost nine pages with questions and goals! This would mark the beginning of a 312-page adventure.

I saw this journaling process as an important way to help the student teacher become a reflective practitioner. We both wrote in the journal almost every school day. Sometimes things at school were so hectic that one or the other of us would take it home and keep it for a couple of days until we could exchange it again. I know that the daily reflections in the journal helped Jason become a better teacher, and they helped me in my understanding of the art of mentoring teachers. I have kept a teaching journal with questions and reflections about my own teaching for over six years.

In this journal, we talked about methodologies, class management, individual students, assessment procedures, research, books, school climate, whole language philosophies, and the importance of change as we continue to teach. These were the basic things I wanted to share with this young man. After 27 years of teaching, I can echo Jason's idea that I still have so much to learn about this art of teaching. Together we learned and relearned some wonderful lessons by writing in this journal.

We learned from our discussions and the reflections we wrote in the journal that teaching is not about control; rather, it is about inviting kids to learn along with you. As collaborators/colleagues, we could discuss and write about issues on a

professional level because I knew from day one that Jason was already a teacher. We just stretched the possibilities by keeping this journal.

He would ask me in our dialogic journal about ways to draw his students into the craft of writing without spending hours on what I call empty "Drill for Skill" exercises found in most composition and literature books. This was a thrilling experience because I wanted Jason to learn an efficient way of combining grammar, vocabulary, writing, and reading so that students could have more opportunity to practice them using a merged approach. What I learned from observing him, talking to him, and reading our journal was that he actually thought of these elements as a whole, not as separate entities. I had not encountered another practicing whole language teacher until I watched Jason at work.

Conclusions

Jane: As we have completed nearly 300 pages of the journal, we have noticed common threads about teaching emerge. The journal helped to reveal how the other person was thinking about given issues. I would not have entirely understood Jason's feelings about the things we discussed if I had not read his thoughts on paper in the journal. There were times when Jason needed to talk to me about class progress, and the journal was the only way he could articulate his ideas or explain his struggles with an issue. Passing the journal back and forth created a unique opportunity to understand each other's perspectives.

Jason: With all of the information and experience that Dr. Blystone shared with me, as well as all of the knowledge I was gaining in the classroom, it was easy to become overwhelmed and stressed out. Writing in the journal became a great way to relieve some of that overwhelming stress that is so unique to student teaching. Upon reflection, I think that because the student teaching experience is so demanding, writing in the journal was sometimes my only way to vent and recuperate.

One of the aspects of being an educator that I learned in my student teaching experience is that it is paramount to validate everything that is done in the classroom for legal purposes. I felt relieved knowing I had a written record of the events that took place during each day. Any time that I felt uncomfortable about something in the classroom (i.e., student confrontations, disciplinary action, inappropriate behavior), I would record it in detail in my journal. Besides protecting myself, it gave Dr. Blystone a complete record of what happened in the class even when she was not standing right beside me.

While I was student teaching, Dr. Blystone and I challenged each other to come up with new teaching techniques as well as to discuss current research that supported our individual teaching styles and methodologies. One of the methodologies that Dr. Blystone challenged me with was the concept of literature circles, which she had used the previous six years. She bought two copies of *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* (Daniels, 1994). We read the book simultaneously and used our journal to express our thoughts about it, so we could respond to each other's ideas. This enabled us to observe from a common reference point how the literature circle activities, tailored to the differences that existed between the two classes, unfolded in the classroom.

Jane: Jason and I also learned to choose which things in education are worth fighting for and which are just little skirmishes that are better left to those who choose to continue to ignore research on the teaching of language arts. We often wrote about our experiences with such things as reviewing senior graduation portfolios or dealing with our students who were still grieving after the accidental death of a classmate. These were the times when the journal was most effective.

As we progressed through the journal, several others participated in our written conversation. I had some great written conversations with his fiancée, also an education major, which broadened my understanding of Jason as a multi-faceted person. We also had triangular conversations with his college supervisor who engaged with us in a very personal way in the journal. Dr. Tompkins shared new ideas with us and confirmed our practices, giving us written "fatherly hugs" along our educational journey through his commentary in the journal margins.

Mentoring Jason has been a wonderful experience for this veteran teacher, and I know I have encountered one of the best teachers I have ever mentored. The proof is in the journal. ●

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CEL at Convention

Judith Kelly, Program Chair, invites all who are interested in leadership issues to "Leadership Matters," the CEL Convention, November 20–22. On page 31 of the July 2000 *Council Chronicle*, you will find information about four of the five featured speakers—Victor Villanueva, Jr., Patricia Breivik, Miriam Chaplin, and Luis "Tony" Baez. The fifth speaker is Gloria Ladson-Billings, author of the acclaimed book *The Dreamkeepers*. She is a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. For her work on successful teachers for African American students, she received a Spencer Post-doctoral Fellowship from the National Academy of Education. She has written numerous articles and chapters about multicultural education that have appeared in publications such as *The Journal of Education*, *Theory into Practice*, and *Social Education*.

Mentoring*

by Donald Shafer, Sidney High School, Sidney, Ohio

Recently, I had the opportunity to read our school's new mentoring program for entry level teachers. After reviewing it and having read others, I wish to make several observations. First of all, the philosophy of the new programs is idealistic enough—"help teachers grow professionally . . . receive needed professional and personal support . . . develop both confidence and decision-making skills." However, these programs lack the very soul of mentoring.

The type of mentoring most schools adopt is called facilitated mentoring, defined in *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring* as "a structure and series of processes designed to create effective mentoring relationships, guide the desired behavior change of those involved, and evaluate the results for the proteges, the mentors, and the organizations with the primary purpose of systematically developing the skills and leadership ability of the less experienced members of an organization" (Murray, p. 5). This is all well and good, and institutional mentoring may work.

But is this indeed mentoring? Is the mentor being put into the role of supervisor in some of these programs? The answer to these troubling questions is, I believe, yes, especially when looking at the documents that are usually found at the end of mentoring packages and that the mentor and mentee must fill out. In my school's mentoring package, there are ten forms to be filled out. They are titled "Knowledge of Students," "Instruction Plan for a Single Lesson," "Classroom Observation Record," "Reflection Sheet," and "Instructional Artifact Sheet," to name only a few. Questions remain. These documents appear to be supervisory in nature, especially the Classroom Observation Form. Will the principal see these records, and will the mentor be put in the role of evaluator? Further, will there be cases where the mentor will be used to fire an unsuccessful teacher?

Another component of many institutional mentoring programs is the method of selecting mentors. Mentors are often volunteers who are not screened in any way. In many districts, mentors are given stipends and are expected to observe the new teacher closely. This begs another question: Can just anyone be a mentor? The answer is no. Mentors are special individuals who often possess several characteristics that support good mentoring. Generally they are open-minded, objective, nondefensive, articulate, insightful, and possess a good sense of humor. Although many people possess these characteristics, some do not.

After studying mentoring for a number of years, I have concluded that there is magic in mentoring that "just happens."

After studying mentoring for a number of years, I have concluded that there is magic in mentoring that "just happens." One of the best definitions of a mentor comes from Daniel Levinson: "A mentor is a person who shares a dream—not necessarily a consciously formulated career goal, but a cherished perception of self. The mentor encourages the young person's development by believing in him, sharing his youthful dream and giving it his blessing, helping him to define the newly emerging self in its newly discovered world, and giving the young adult the autonomy to work out a reasonably satisfactory life structure that contains the dream" (1978, p. 48).

Looking in depth at this definition and applying it to new teachers is not difficult. When a teacher enters the profession, his or her dream is to be the best, to share knowledge with students, and to shape and guide future generations, to give students tools that take them beyond their believed capabilities. The novice teacher's self-perception is entwined in this belief. The true mentor enters the picture and nurtures this belief. Nurturing the dream does not come about through forms and class observations, but through encouraging, instructing, advising, helping with career moves, inspiring, role modeling, and friendship.

Recently, I had a student teacher. My first questions to him were, "Why do you want to be a teacher?" and "Do you realize it is very hard with few tangible rewards?"

"Yes, I know all of that," he said. He was ready to teach high schoolers what they needed to know.

About the third week of his student-teaching experience, he told me he was not going to be a teacher, but he had decided to go into medicine. I asked why the sudden change. He wanted to know how I managed to stay in education as long as I had. He was discouraged. The students were more knowledgeable than he expected, and he found he was not as prepared as he thought. I explained to him that after my 32 years in the classroom, I would *still* choose teaching as a profession. He looked at me and said "wow." Then he said he wanted to finish student teaching. I spent more time with him over the next few weeks, encouraging him and cajoling him to do better at times. We shared coffee after school and talked about students and education and idealism. He taught for the remainder of the quarter. After the ninth

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week. I asked him how he was coming along with his decision, telling him that now was the time to change career paths if he was unhappy in education. He told me that after our talks, he began looking at education differently, and he thought that maybe he was expecting too much of himself earlier. And yes, he is staying in education.

No forms were involved. I only encouraged and helped him shape what he already knew he wanted, his dream of becoming a great teacher.

Two other examples serve to illustrate my point. Two novice teachers were hired to teach at the high school a year apart. Through the normal process, they were each paired with a mentor who had volunteered to help them. In both cases, the mentoring was not done well. In the first case, the mentor did not have the skill or the idealism to be a mentor; in the second, time schedules never matched. As a result, both new teachers struggled with many questions that no one seemed to answer. I saw what was happening and kept encouraging them because I knew they were quality educators with unlimited potential. I tried to help them understand the social structure of the school and told them to avoid the cynics who never had much good to say about any student. We spent many lunches together talking about discipline, testing, and student learning.

These two individuals are now becoming great teachers and will soon become the core of the teaching staff. They are idealistic, have a strong desire to teach, and are pursuing advanced degrees. Next year, they will team teach an experimental course and serve as building representatives for the high school. Our relationship continues, and I make myself available by answering questions and talking with them. Did the supervisory forms help them understand the structure of the staff or how to navigate between the Scylla's and Charybdis's in the building? The answer is no. Human contact, caring, and mentoring did.

Bringing the discussion back to the dream and the magic, I found this quote from Doloz's *Effective Teaching and Mentoring* where he emphasizes that the teaching function of the mentoring process brings about "the dream." Doloz wrote:

> Their purpose [mentors] as Bruno Bettleheim says in *The Use of Enchantment*, is to remind us that we can indeed, survive the terror of the coming journey and undergo the transformation by moving through, not around, our fear. Mentors give us the magic that allows us to enter the darkness: a talisman to protect us from evil spells, a gem of wise advice, a map, and sometimes simply courage. But always the mentor appears near the outset of the journey as a helper, equipping us in some way for what is to come, a midwife to our dreams (p. 17).

I am not saying that institutional mentoring cannot work. I am sure that in some cases it does. What I am saying is that we must encourage experienced teachers to become mentors to new teachers. Throw out the forms. Become the guide that helps a colleague realize dreams. That is the magic of mentoring. ◐

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Call for Book Manuscripts

Manuscripts are being solicited for the CEL's proposed second monograph, *The Mentoring Guide: Issues in Developing New Teachers and Leaders*. Manuscripts should focus on experiences and ideas from teachers, administrators, and teacher-educators who focus on K–12 English language arts classrooms.

The volume will address successful collaborative teacher-education programs between precollegiate and university teachers; the roles, responsibilities, and training of mentors; meeting the training needs of new teachers and/or school leaders in the first three years of practice and beyond; qualities of good mentors; the role of English language arts leaders in implementing and sustaining mentoring programs for new teachers and leaders.

The editor is interested in essays that show, don't tell; that provide classroom/school descriptions of challenges and/or successes in implementing a mentoring program; that contain teacher voices about the mentor–mentee relationship; that demonstrate ways to encourage new leaders in the English language arts; and that present research results that address successful mentoring practices.

Manuscripts must include author's name, address, and telephone (with e-mail and fax number, if available). Proposals and inquiries may be sent denoting a tentative article title and a 2–3-page summary of the proposed article. Deadline for submission of manuscripts is **June 1, 2001**.

Send manuscripts to: Henry Kiernan, West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930 or send an e-mail attachment to kiernan@nac.net.

CEE–CEL Retreat

In August 2000, a weekend retreat occurred for a group of Conference on English Education (CEE) and Conference on English Leadership (CEL) Executive Committee members in Fort Collins, Colorado. Its purpose was to plan for the future of each organization and to explore ways of working together. Organized and co-chaired by Louann Reid and Nancy McCracken, each organization prepared a new vision, reviewed conference policies and procedures, and created a joint caucus to recommend ways to build more enduring partnerships between schools and colleges.

The resultant Mentorship Commission will hold its first meeting at the NCTE Annual Convention in Milwaukee and will submit proposals for joint panels at future NCTE conferences. For the full report on the retreat, log on to www.coedu.usf.edu/cel.

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2000 CEL Election Slate

Candidates for Associate Chair

Lela M. DeToye, Associate Dean, School of Education, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE); Associate professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction (C&I); member CEL Hospitality Committee. **Formerly:** Chair and Elementary Program Director of C&I, SIUE; CEL's liaison to CEE; president of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English (IATE); director of the Mississippi Valley Writing Project. **Member:** NCTE, CEL, CEE, IATE, SLATE, NCATE Folio reviewer. **Publications:** Guest editor of the *English Leadership Quarterly;* "Writing a Student Profile" in NCTE's *Process and Portfolios in Writing Instruction;* several articles in the *Illinois English Bulletin*. **Awards:** 1999 SIUE Great Teacher Award. **Program Participant:** NCTE, CEL, IATE, others.

Position Statement: CEL needs leaders who are well known throughout NCTE. Through positions on NCTE Commissions and Committees, too numerous to list above, I am known and respected as an energetic, organized worker for the goals and ideals of professional English language arts teachers. Having moved through several leadership roles in my career, I am aware of the unique concerns of professionals that assume these roles in English departments, public and private schools, colleges and universities. I am eager to apply my experience and leadership qualities in serving the CEL membership as Associate Chair.

Rudolph Sharpe, Coordinator of Language Arts, Manheim Township School District, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; adjunct professor, Harrisburg Area Community College; associate chair, CEL Editorial Board; NCTE Committee on Comparative and World Literature; past president, National State Teachers of the Year. **Formerly:** High school English teacher; department chair; president, Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of English. **Member:** NCTE, CEL, ASCD, IRA. **Award:** Pennsylvania State Teacher of the Year, 1992. **Program Participant:** NCTE, CEL, PCTE, Pennsylvania Writing Project, others.

Position Statement: Although I have been a member of CEL (CSSEDC) since 1972, I have only recently moved into a leadership role, nevertheless, through the years, CEL has provided valuable mentorship which has given me the confidence and knowledge to assume my current position. CEL must broaden its membership base by aggressively recruiting young professionals, both for their benefit and for the vitality of the organization. By increasing membership benefits, as well as increasing the visibility of CEL, we can help to secure the future of CEL as well as its mission to serve leaders in the language arts.

Candidates for Member-at-Large

Jennifer Abrams, Lead trainer, Secondary New Teacher Program, Palo Alto Unified School District, Palo Alto, California; Beginning teacher coach, PAUSD; Assistant to directors of Secondary and Elementary Education, PAUSD; educational consultant. **Formerly:** English teacher for nine years; teacher on special assignment focusing on assessment, technology, and living skills curriculum; mentor teacher; hospitality co chair CATE (1995–96). **Member:** CEL, NCTE, CATE, CCCTE, ASCD, NSDC, Palo Alto Foundation for Education, Leadership Midpeninsula. **Publications:** article in *California English;* consultant for commercial publisher. **Awards:** NEH Fellow (1993); Fulbright Fellow (1995). **Program Participant:** NCTE, CEL, CCCTE, others.

Position Statement: As we head into the next century, the needs of our profession are great. As educational leaders, we must find ways to recruit and retain teachers who will be successful with the wide range of students in our schools. We must advocate effectively on behalf of the public schools as private corporations join us in the challenge of educating our youth, and we must reconsider our definition of literacy to include a broader range of texts such as mass media and the Internet. CEL should educate its members with regards to these challenges so all CEL members can be more effective change agents in their districts and their schools.

Bruce Emra, Supervisor of English and teacher of English, Northern Highlands Regional High School, Allendale, New Jersey. **Member:** NCTE, CEL, New Jersey Council of Teachers of English, Language Arts Leader's Association (New Jersey). **Publications:** *Coming of Age, Vol. 1: Fiction about Youth and Adolescence; Coming of Age, Vol. 2: Literature about Youth and Adolescence, Sports in Literature: Experiencing the Thrill of Competition through Stories, Poems, and Nonfiction.* **Program Participant:** NCTE 1998, 1999; CEL 1997, 1998, 1999.

Position Statement: There is no group in North America that has a more direct role in the quality of the

teaching of the English language arts than CEL. I would like us to become even stronger in terms of contributing ideas and positions to our parent organization, NCTE, and influencing, beyond our wonderful workshops, the teaching of our beloved and diverse discipline. I would also like each of us to try to bring two or three new people to our annual meeting. The CEL presentations that I have observed and participated in during the last ten years have been extraordinary and inspiring. I would like to play a role in maintaining that high quality of professional stimulation for our colleagues.

David Noskin, Assistant Director of Communication Arts, Adlai E. Stevenson High School, Lincolnshire, Illinois. **Formerly:** High school English teacher for 11 years; reading/writing coordinator; member of program selection committee for Illinois Association of Teachers of English; instructor at University of Wisconsin–Madison; instructor, Roosevelt University, Chicago. **Member:** CEL, IATE, ASCD. **Publications:** "Interdisciplinary English Means English First" and "Applying Multiculturalism to a High School American Literature Course," both in *English Journal;* "Teaching Writing in the High School: Fifteen Years in the Making" will appear in an upcoming issue of *English Journal;* "Seeking Coherence through Interdisciplinary Teaching" in *American Secondary Education.* **Awards:** University of Wisconsin Carrie R. Barton Memorial Scholarship (1994); Who's Who in American Schools (1992); Sallie-Mae Outstanding First-Year Teacher Award (1986). **Program Participant:** NCTE; IATE.

Position Statement: CEL needs to include the voices of those who are immersed in the culture of the high school. My voice brings youthful experience and speaks to the concerns of teachers, curricula, and students. A member-at-large has the opportunity to strengthen the relationship CEL has with administrators, teachers, and, ultimately, students. There needs to be a dialogue for continued growth in our profession.

Camille Quaite, teacher, IB/AP Honors English; English chairperson, Bellaire High, Houston, Texas, ISD; president, HCTE, site-based decision committee member; HISD lead teacher; academic decathlon coach; literary magazine sponsor; Project Bravo Opera sponsor; coordinator, English Summer Grammar Camp; chairperson, Curriculum Committee; liaison, Public Relations Committee; Personnel Committee; Interview/Selection Committee for assistant principal; GT/AP committee chair, 2001 TCTE Conference. **Formerly:** First VP/Programs, HCTE; IB External Examiner, English Language B; representative, District Curriculum Alignment Committee; regular and basic-level English. **Member:** HCTE, TCTE, NCTE, CEL.

Publications: Coauthor, *Literature and Grammar Guide for Transitional English;* State Board member/consultant, Literature and Grammar, Prentice Hall. **Awards:** NEH Scholarships, 1989, 1995; ESU Scholarship, Exeter, Oxford University; PTO Technology Grant; Houston Business Alliance Grant. **Program Participant:** CEL, HCTE, HISD, TCTE.

Position Statement: As a CEL leader, I shall advocate the inclusion of a diversity of instructional techniques. Currently, teachers face demands of increased testing standards while including multiple media and technological instruction. Concurrently, more emphasis is placed on intensive training in varied instructional approaches to meet demands of students' multiple intelligences and learning modes. Leaders must remember that this philosophy applies equally to educators; greatest success occurs in an environment of academic freedom for teachers and pupils to develop their unique learning styles.

2000 CEL Ballot

The CEL Bylaws permit members to vote either by mail or at the CEL business session of the NCTE Annual Convention. Each member mailing a ballot should mark it and mail it in an envelope with a **return name and address** to: Bill Newby, CEL Ballots, Shaker Heights High School, 15911 Aldersyde Dr., Shaker Heights, OH 44120.

Ballots must be postmarked **no later than November 1, 2000.** Members who prefer to vote at the Convention will be given a ballot and an envelope at the business session of CEL. An institution with membership may designate one individual as the representative to vote on its behalf. Please list the institution's name and address on the outside of the envelope.

Associate Chair
(vote for one)

- ❑ Lela M. DeToye
- ❑ Rudolph Sharpe
- ❑ _____
  (write-in candidate)

Member-at-Large
(vote for two)

- ❑ Jennifer Abrams
- ❑ Bruce Emra
- ❑ David Noskin
- ❑ Camille Quaite
- ❑ _____
  (write-in candidate)

Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

April 2001 (deadline December 30, 2000)
Teachers as Scholars

August 2001 (deadline April 16, 2001)
Matters of Thinking

October 2001 (deadline June 15, 2001)
All about Journaling

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries through the April 2001 issue to Henry Kiernan, Editor, *English Leadership Quarterly*, West Morris Regional High School District, Administration Building, Four Bridges Road, Chester, NJ 07930; phone 908-879-6404, ext. 281; fax 908-879-8861; e-mail kiernan@nac.net. For issues beginning with the August 2001 issue, contact Bonita Wilcox at Miller Research Learning Center, Room 111, Edinboro, PA 16444; e-mail: bwilcox@edinboro.edu; phone: (814) 398-2528. ●

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▷ IN THIS ISSUE

Defining Curriculum Integration

by Dr. Timothy A. Dohrer, New Trier High School, Winnetka, Illinois

Over the years, curriculum integration has been called by many names and has seen its popularity rise and fall. Most recently, a series of books have renewed interest in integration, and teachers have begun experimenting with it (see Beane, 1997; Brazee & Capelluti, 1995; Stevenson & Carr, 1993; Pate, Homestead, & McGinnis, 1997). In 1993, a survey of middle schools revealed that interdisciplinary teaming made up over 50% of the curriculum (McEwin, Dickinson, & Jenkins, 1996). Slowly, middle schools and high schools are moving away from pure disciplinary structures to interdisciplinary and integrated curricula. Beane (1997) calls this "the search for an integrative curriculum"(p.19).

This search, however, is complicated by language. The term "integration" as it relates to curriculum is a source of arguments over its meaning. In many ways, the term "curriculum integration" is similar to "portfolio," a term used constantly in education but usually not clearly defined or understood. Most discussions of integration refer to the connections made between two or several disciplines. This interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary curriculum offers pairings of disciplines such as English and history or science and math.

In 1997, James Beane published *Curriculum Integration: Designing the Core of Democratic Education* in an attempt to clearly explain curriculum integration differently. Beane grounds his definition in the work of progressive educators such as John Dewey and L.T. Hopkins. Beane writes: "Curriculum integration is a curriculum design that is concerned with enhancing the possibilities for personal and social integration through the organization of curriculum around significant problems and issues, collaboratively identified by educators and young people, without regard for subject-area boundaries" (Beane, 1997, p. x). For Beane, curriculum integration does not begin with the disciplines; it begins with students.

In explaining curriculum integration in this way, Beane places integration in a particular lineage that is radically different from the interdisciplinary curriculum so prevalent in middle schools and high schools of the 1990s. It also forces educators to understand the difference between them. However, I would argue that both approaches attempt to integrate the curriculum and make it more coherent for students. As the articles in this issue show, *any* attempt at integration is a step closer to coherence and should be celebrated.

English teachers are at the leading edge of this work. The nature of our discipline allows us to build bridges easily to other subjects. Our preparation in language arts provides flexibility to make any idea relevant to our students. Finally, our ability to personalize the curriculum and our own teaching opens up the learning beyond the English discipline. English teachers have an important role to play in integrating the curriculum. No matter what we call it, we are leading the way towards a more coherent and integrated school experience. ○

INSIDE

The Economy of Curriculum Integration: Profit and Loss 2
by Deborah Dean with Susan Stone and Don Forney

English: The Integrating Force 5
by Ronald T. Sion

Interdisciplinary Experiences: Prospects and Pitfalls 7
by Rosanne Dattilo Nelson

Exercising the Challenges of Curricular Integration 13
by Adrian Rodgers

Tales from the Front: Experiments with Interdisciplinary Instruction 16
by Laura Smith

Interdisciplinary Teaching: The War of the Titans? 18
by Michael A. Bancroft

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The Economy of Curriculum Integration: Profit and Loss

by Deborah Dean with Susan Stone and Don Forney, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

Curriculum integration and interdisciplinary curriculum are terms that have a variety of definitions (Shoemaker, 1989; Relan & Kimpston, 1991; Kiernan, 1993). Despite this variety, however, common concepts repeat themselves through all uses of the terms: considering the whole child, educating for lifelong learning, making connections, reasoning and problem solving, and providing personal experience as a basis for learning. Proponents of interdisciplinary learning perceive of education as a fragmented system where the traditional subject-centered curriculum has lost relevance in today's world. In such a system, students receive a potpourri of information isolated from real life: English is something we do during first period.

Our experience with curriculum integration helped us and our students find more relevance between courses as well as between school and the outside world. The benefits were deeply felt. Despite the benefits, however, our enterprise did not live long because integration requires commitments that strain some school settings. This is the story of both the rise and the fall of interdisciplinary curriculum at one school.

Making a Model

Our integration model was based on this key foundational principle: the integrity of the individual discipline is essential. In other words, English is not just a vehicle for teaching social studies. No one content area can usurp another. Staying true to this principle required not only care in creating the integration, but also flexibility on the part of the participants. Sometimes pet projects had to be modified; teachers couldn't continue to do the same things they had done for years. This injected a freshness into the curricula in both content areas, but it also necessitated each partner being sensitive to the other partner's content and curricular objectives.

We began by establishing connections: Did we want to connect a piece of literature to a historical period, a writing skill to a writing project, a concept from class to life outside of school? These connections came from reviewing the content of the courses to be integrated, in our case, social studies and language arts. We had to be realistic: not everything could connect, but we could find connections of varying degrees all through a course. We settled on one or two major crossover assignments a quarter with several secondary connections and a multitude of minor ones (primarily verbal references to the content of the other class). Once we decided on possible connections, we wrote focusing objectives that helped us clarify exactly what we wanted to achieve through the major connec-

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy where such endorsement is clearly specified.

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tions and how our activities would reflect our district's learning objectives. These focusing objectives were also useful in providing rationales to parents and students for the crossover projects. We considered resources next, since integration sometimes inspires activities and projects that go beyond traditional classroom activities. One of the biggest resources we had to consider was the support of the administration in scheduling the students for optimum effectiveness of the integration plans.

Ours was a suburban junior high school of about 1200 students with six 58-minute periods. Our ideal integrated curriculum consisted of a 2-period block in which students would study both social studies and language arts. In this way, we could keep one group in one course for two periods one day and trade the next day, thus creating our own block schedule as needed for activities.

Our second-choice model was to have the same students in our classes, even if the classes weren't back to back. This still allowed us to make curricular connections and crossovers that were essential for achieving the purposes of integration, although students found this more disruptive. Also, it was best if the participating teachers shared a common preparation period. Otherwise, we faced the problem of finding a meeting time before or after school. These scheduling needs required support from the administration and flexibility from the staff since such scheduling can result in inadvertent tracking. It takes time, effort, and sacrifices to build these schedules.

Building Integration

We started our integrated curriculum with two teams working in the ninth grade. The first year, our integration was informal as we experimented with matching content between the two courses. For instance, I scheduled the reading of *The Odyssey* to coincide with the study of Greece and Rome in social studies, and *Romeo and Juliet* with the Renaissance. Our students often seemed unaware of the connections between the content of the two courses, so we learned to explain and comment on the connections in some detail.

As we saw that making direct connections enhanced our students' learning and interest, we branched out, creating more connections of varying complexity. Sometimes the major crossovers were assignments that used content from both courses but that received grades in only one course: the eulogy to Sumer crossover was one that used the content from social studies connected to the writing lessons from English. It received credit in social studies only. At least one major crossover project per quarter received credit in both courses, sometimes graded together, sometimes graded for different elements in each course. The spring research paper was one example of this kind of crossover.

As we saw that making direct connections enhanced our students' learning and interest, we branched out, creating more connections of varying complexity.

How does an assignment cross over? The year-end English project consisted of a script and a performance—either live or videotaped—in which student groups revealed what they knew about historical and literary figures they had studied during the year. They were to put their own combination of literary and historical figures in a crisis setting and then reveal character through their handling of the crisis. The scripts would also reveal the students' understanding of plot development and script writing. With this background, students put Atticus Finch, Odysseus, and Juliet working together as a "mission impossible" team to save Abraham Lincoln from assassination. Another script pitted Atticus Finch and Odysseus against Hitler and Bob Ewell in a Bermuda Triangle rescue drama. Although students used content from history, the assignment received credit only in English.

In another crossover assignment, students developed their research on a person of historical influence into a formal paper. During English, we worked through the writing process with prewriting, research techniques, drafting, minilessons on paragraphing and organizing ideas, and revising. During social studies, the lessons from English were reinforced through review, research, and time spent in class on various aspects of the writing process. Students could talk about content or writing with either teacher, but historical questions were most often highlighted in social studies whereas writing questions were a focus in English. Students turned in a copy of the paper to each class and received a grade in both classes.

The next year, we revised our process, making a tighter connection and a smoother flow between courses. This was a natural outgrowth of enthused student responses and our evolving ability to see more possibilities for connections. We found that our familiarity with the other course content allowed us to make almost daily references to what connected the two classes. The students grew to see the classes as related and the teachers as a team.

After two years of good results with the ninth-grade integration, we decided to expand—one team to eighth grade and the other to seventh. In this integrated curriculum, we were able to find thematic connections that helped focus our courses even further while continuing to implement crossovers at least several times a quarter. In the eighth grade, students wrote travel brochures describing geography studied in social studies, cooked colonial recipes and wrote food reviews after the "feast," and read literature related to

history and our state that corresponded to social studies curriculum objectives. The classes worked as one unit, and the students found the program exciting and effective. Every new effort improved our ability to help students make important connections.

Faculty response varied. After we had expanded our program, two things happened. On the positive side, the integration had students talking, so other teachers took note. Faculty in other areas began to approach us about expanding the integration to include science and art. It was exciting to consider the possibilities of such an expansion. On the down side, however, the expanded program affected scheduling to the point that other teachers in social studies and English were also blocked whether they wanted to be or not. Some tried to take advantage of the blocking but found the time and effort too cumbersome. Some did not want to give up their autonomy. Because our program was interesting and, therefore, talked about, some teachers complained that we were getting the "best students."

Watching It Fall

After several years, despite the positive feedback from students and parents, we lost the administration's support for our scheduling needs. We no longer had classes back-to-back or common planning periods. Worse, we shared only about 50% of the students. We continued to integrate what we could, but with much less success. Trying to make verbal and content connections between the courses for the students we shared was better than teaching in isolation, although it was obviously not as effective as our other models since we couldn't fully implement the crossover assignments. For the students who were not in both classes, however, the verbal connections we tried to make between courses were both confusing and alienating. It was as though half of the class belonged to a club that excluded the other half—we knew the passwords and jokes and they didn't. Eventually, the whole process just broke down. We were back to teaching in isolation.

Benefits

After using an integrated model for ninth-grade social studies and English for two years, parents and students were surveyed for their responses to the curriculum. The comments on these surveys show that students realized more benefits from the activities that made connections between the two courses. One parent wrote that the integration created a "real understanding of the subject and also the ability to relate it to current situations. Vanessa and I were talking about something one day and out of the clear blue she related our conversation to something in *The Odyssey* and she had a much better overall understanding of what we were talking about." Another parent wrote: "Steve is now starting to see the importance of his education."

In time, the students themselves began to articulate connections between language arts and social studies as well as between the classroom and the real world.

Through integration, students observed their teamed teachers moving from one room to the other, trading instruction time with the classes and quoting one another. Students became more accountable for their work and began to display an active role in the partnership. As one student said, "In a company, a group of people gather together every day and they use cooperation and teamwork to get things done. I see the two classes being together as a team, but also people in the class act as a group, knowing others well and willing to cooperate with each other. By having two classes I benefited by learning the worth and many advantages of working together."

Though initially prompted by knowing that their teachers communicated with one another, the students' sense of accountability became intrinsically motivated as enthusiasm grew. According to one student, "I learned more about subjects and it gave me the opportunity to see two points of view on the subjects." Many reflected that the team situation gave them more time to complete projects and assignments, thus reducing stress. Surprisingly, several even said the teaming made it seem as though the students actually had less work overall when in reality they did not.

These positive results were magnified as teachers emphasized the connections. In time, the students themselves began to articulate connections between language arts and social studies as well as between the classroom and the real world. One student, working in a language arts group, commented, "Hey, we can use that stuff Mr. Forney was talking about in social studies for this." Another student's response was representative of the connections many students made: "I've learned how to take something I've learned and use it somewhere else. That is a must-have skill."

Parent responses validated the students' opinions: "I feel that the social studies assignments suffer because of the lack of language structure . . . . All of the assignments [with integration] had double the importance and showed them [the students] that English follows all assignments and the structuring of their thoughts." Parents articulated other benefits for the integrative model, such as increased interest, better understanding and retention of content, and an improved willingness to learn. The teachers involved in implementing this integration observed actions and attitudes in class

that supported the students' and parents' responses.

In *Flowers for Algernon*, the main character, Charlie, was an outsider and often alone. Because of the experimentation done with him, he was able to fully participate in a community he'd been excluded from prior to that experimentation. The effects of the experiment, sadly, were only temporary for Charlie, and the story ends with him alone as he was in the beginning, except that now there is a sense of what could have been. Although this is probably not the best comparison, those of us who participated in this integration experiment feel a similar sense of loss. For a while, a very little while, we saw what exciting possibilities education can hold for both students and teachers. It was energizing. The benefits were evident. Yet the costs were more than our school wanted to pay, and so we were left with a sense of what could have been—and what can be if participants are willing to commit the resources necessary for effective integration.

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English: The Integrating Force

by Ronald T. Sion, Ph.D., Saint Raphael Academy, Pawtucket, Rhode Island

"The most important intellectual skill is the mastery of language. Others, such as knowledge of mathematics, are acquired by human beings through the languages they have mastered," writes the noted philosopher Anthony Kenny in his intelligent treatise, *The Metaphysics of Mind* (p. 20). His point is that only through a study of the acquisition and utilization of language can one come to an understanding of the human mind, for the dividing line that separates the human mind from that of all other creatures is its ability to learn and use a language and, most importantly, to think and articulate thought, discovery, and knowledge through that language. "The intellect," therefore, " is the capacity for thinking those thoughts which only a language-user can think. And thoughts which only a language-user can think are thoughts for which no expression in non-linguistic behavior can be conceived" (p. 128).

Is there any subject, any discipline, or any topic that is part of a school's curriculum that is not being taught through an understanding of language? Even those teachers of a language other than English will have to work through it in order to associate the new words with their meanings. Since language is an integral and a necessary ability that interfaces with all subjects, should it not blend with all subjects in reality in an interdisciplinary mode? With some qualifications, I would respond "yes."

Isn't it intriguing to review brochures for new workshops that demonstrate techniques for reading and writing across the curriculum? Can anyone point out to me when these two skills were not a part of all curricula? Don't I recall word problems in math? The last time I checked, directions on a science test, the stages of a mathematical progression, an explanation of chemical properties, as well as history, art, and physical science texts were all written in a language. Haven't I heard teachers of these subjects relate stories of students who did poorly on a test but participated successfully in class because they did not comprehend the instructions, or they were unable to write the response in a clear and convincing manner? At first glance, therefore, it may appear that advocating an integration of English into all subjects should take place because the skills taught in English serve no purpose in isolation. This integration would solve the dilemma posed in this question: If English is an entity limited to one classroom in a school of segregated disciplines, why should one be held accountable to use it correctly in a discipline not labeled English? My recommendation for interdisciplinary instruction, however, goes much deeper than this somewhat limited and superficial argument.

An Interdisciplinary Model

Seven years ago, I facilitated a study group on "Thematic Interdisciplinary Instruction" at Saint Raphael Academy, a private, coeducational high school (grades 9–12) located in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The group brainstormed what the school could do along the lines of interdisciplinary thematic units, wrote a proposal, and submitted it to the principal. Thanks to a small school of 540 students devoid of a bureaucratic structure and an administrator in the mainstream of innovative educational reform, it was quickly approved; some seven months later, it was operating. As a member of one of the teams and eventually the Interdisciplinary

Studies Chair, I have taught the course now for six successful years.

The ninth-grade program that materialized integrates English, social studies, and fine art daily in a double-period block. Three of the four sections are not tracked and are team taught; one section that developed in the fourth year of the program is exclusively reserved for accelerated students. The syllabus encompasses a study of non-Western world cultures through history, literature, and art. Thematically, for a three-year period, my team structured four major units: *Self-Portrait, Decisions/Decisions, Group Portrait,* and *Fairness.* All are created, coordinated, and implemented in an interdisciplinary manner, including the stories, books, and poetry that are read; the cultures that are explored; the projects and portfolios assigned; the research generated; the tests, quizzes, and homeworks that are part of the assessment; and the field trips planned outside of the school building. The objectives and goals are the driving force behind the activities; the assessments spring out of the methodologies. This has required a tremendous amount of planning and is ever a labor-intensive and evolving process. Two remarkable rewards have favorably emerged.

First, there is something to be said for the excitement generated when two professionals occupy the same classroom at the same time. Teamwork, camaraderie, and professional skills are learned from one another. In addition, for perhaps the first time, a teacher is forced to examine what and how he or she teaches a specific subject through the lens of another discipline. The end result is often a dynamic learning atmosphere in which teachers and students are the beneficiaries. I have had the privilege of working with three different team members over the years. They have challenged me as a person and as a professional. The planning sessions are filled with energy and enthusiasm. In the classroom, my partner and I have often engaged in a dialogue that spontaneously ignites the students' involvement.

Second, the student becomes an interactive learner by the very nature of the instructional approach. Cooperative learning, peer review, and active participation are encouraged by the very character of the dynamics that connect the materials. Students surveyed yearly indicate that it took some time for them to adapt to the new instructional experience, but once it became familiar, they enjoyed it. Follow-up surveys have indicated that students felt that they covered topics more intensively than in a traditional class, and that their learning was more meaningful than in previous educational settings.

English, most importantly, does not end at the bell because there are no divisions separating one period and one subject from another.

The Ledger Sheet: Has Anything Been Gained?

In previous years at Saint Raphael Academy, there was no ninth-grade social studies component, art was a historical approach limited to a Western perspective, and language arts was a study of various genres as well as a review of basic proficiencies. With this new humanities program, there is a social studies or cultural studies element, and art is viewed as a reflection of a culture's identity. Supporting cultural diversity, students have expanded their horizons in coming to an appreciation of African, Asian, Russian, Indian, and Middle Eastern cultures.

How has English fared as a result of this new approach? More time has become available in the development of communication skills. More writing has taken place than in any previous freshman English program; more oral reports have been delivered; more group projects that inculcate cooperative learning have been completed; and more true research has been accomplished. In addition, new technologies—the Internet, software programs, Hyperstudio—have been seamlessly added to the course of study. English, most importantly, does not end at the bell because there are no divisions separating one period and one subject from another. Literary themes that explore cultural diaspora are interconnected with a historical study of a people; geographical, historical, and literary vocabulary are intertwined; and a study of the works of an artist are woven into the fabric of the cultural tradition being examined. As the definition of a culture evolves into the total way of life of a people, so English becomes a total study that encompasses all topics explored. Students interact in an environment that resembles their real world outside the building—one in which there is no division in thought.

So strongly do I believe in this program that I have offered a series of humanities electives including a course open to seniors that integrates English and history in a study of twentieth-century America. So strongly did the school support this approach that my partner in that course was the Vice-Principal of Academics. Two years ago, an elective entitled *Words and Music* was offered that integrated a study of *Romeo and Juliet, Pygmalion,* and *La Bohème* with their musical counterparts—*West Side Story, My Fair Lady,* and *Rent.* Last year, four major works of literature were connected to the historical time period and a search for values in a course called *Connections.* This year, a course that integrates literature with film was implemented. The future? How about English and ethics? English and science? Why not, English and math?

It should be noted that all has not been a bed of roses. The chemistry of

the team members must work or the end result could be disconcerting. Many teachers in the traditional classroom fear this approach because it may intrude on the sanctity of their separate world where Shakespeare and Brontë and Melville dwell. No one is advocating here that these classical masters all disappear. As a former English department chair and one whose doctoral dissertation is literary in nature, I love the classics. How much more exciting and meaningful, however, are these works when they are connected to the time, the place, the very *zeitgeist* of their period?

A word of advice about experimenting with an interdisciplinary venture: Don't try to change the whole school over as has been done in middle schools. One very interesting model is the one developed at Saint Raphael Academy. While the freshman program thrives and various electives are offered, separate disciplines still coexist in the same environment. These two approaches can live side by side without one harming or impeding the other. However, be careful, for the new child has an infectious way about it. Before you know it, other integrated programs may be born.

Many historians and philosophers see the dawning of a new age for humanity with our entrance into a new millennium. Rapid change in the world of technology has caused many to question where humanity has been and where it is headed. The New World man and woman are called to realize that the dualism of Descartes and the Two Cultures elucidated by Snow were interesting experiments that have been debunked and no longer apply. The transformation required of humankind perhaps demands that we look at things in a new way, with a new vision. The holistic renaissance is in the air; specialization is dissipating. Education must reflect the demands of the world within which humanity resides. As the people who were chained together in Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* found, it is difficult to separate shadows from reality, so educators are called to explore the usefulness of continuing to support a separate but equal world of disciplines. It is within the teaching of English that the interdisciplinary experiment may begin. ●

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Interdisciplinary Experiences: Prospects and Pitfalls

by Rosanne Dattilo Nelson, Webster High School, Webster, New York

"When I see this way I see truly. As Thoreau says, I return to my senses. I am the man who watches the baseball game in silence in an empty stadium. I see the game purely; I'm abstracted and dazed. When it's all over and the white-suited players lope off the green field to their shadowed dugouts, I leap to my feet; I cheer and cheer."

Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

"If you build it, they will come."

Field of Dreams

Some of the most inspiring, overt, and delightful episodes of student learning that I have had the privilege to witness in my 26 years of teaching involved high,school juniors in my English language arts classes responding to interdisciplinary learning experiences. What I observed of student behavior, motivation, and learning was so different from the results of my previous, awkward attempts to create authentic learning situations, and so natural, that watching students participate made me feel like I was watching that metaphorical baseball game Annie Dillard describes in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* or Ray Kinsella in *Field of Dreams*. The main difference between me and them is that what I had seen—the results of interdisciplinary lessons—was more believable and became more anchored in my consciousness because I had witnessed it not alone, but with art and social studies teachers. This combination of English language arts, art, and social studies became both the inspiration for and the nemesis of taking the experiences of those individual lessons to the level of an interdisciplinary curriculum.

Interdisciplinary learning experiences can have a profound effect on both students and teachers, but I will focus on teachers first. The inspiring interdisciplinary experiences in which I had the good fortune to be involved prompted me, like Ray Kinsella in *Field of Dreams*, to go back in order to go forward—not only in terms of what I did in the classroom but also in my own professional development. At the same time, I found myself using interdisciplinary teaching methods that I had first used as a student teacher and waking in the middle of the night to write for publication, something I had not done successfully since graduate school. This epiphany culminated for me with the publication of an article in *Notes Plus* in January 1995 about my interdisciplinary experiences and my one-semester sabbatical to study interdisciplinary teaching with Alan Purves at the University of Albany, SUNY. So if my experiences constitute an example, it's apparent that interdisciplinary learning experiences can have a profound effect on the development of the teachers involved.

Although the results of interdisciplinary learning can be spectacular, what is required for implementation is often enough to exhaust even the best-intentioned and most enthusiastic of educators. As a result of my own experiences, I can speak with certainty to the arduous task of fostering even individual lesson plans in interdisciplinary teaching and learning. It demands not only a leap of faith and an enormous amount of courage and creativity on the part of individual teachers, but it also demands a great deal of time and a willingness to foster the collegiality that allows teachers to relinquish their fondness for their exclusive single-subject curriculum. It also demands an openness and flexibility on the part of both teachers and students. After all, experience dictates that any method of teaching is not for the faint of heart, but the interdisciplinary style often requires a role reversal of sorts with which many educators and students are not comfortable.

Interdisciplinary learning experiences make learners out of both students and teachers. At their best, they allow students to construct knowledge and, in so doing, teach lessons that draw from their environment. Some students see the interdisciplinary "baseball game" from the moment they are exposed to it; others resist what is new. Students who are most resistant are not willing to give up certainty in their learning. These are the students who continue to want weekly spelling and vocabulary tests in English language arts well into high school. If young people are open to it, however, an interdisciplinary approach empowers them to learn and make sense of their learning. It is the role reversal of children teaching adults that Mary Catherine Bateson (1994), who witnessed this in her own children, calls "learning along the way."

In the same sense, only adults who allow themselves to be mystified by learning will see the baseball game, too. The whole process requires teachers to be observers, to be willing to go off in unexpected ways, and to allow the students to do the same as they discover knowledge in seemingly unrelated places. Then these same teachers must return to the point of departure in order to experience what teaching and learning in the twenty-first century should really be about. It is like the experience Ray Kinsella has in *Field of Dreams* when he has to literally go back in order to go forward, when learning takes precedence in life, and when seeing the baseball game might be a lone but incredibly satisfying activity.

Therefore, it is not enough that the advantages of interdisciplinary learning outweigh the disadvantages; in the process of development, the disadvantages are often overwhelming. Perhaps this is the way it has to be in education. Mike Rose (1995) defines good teaching as pushing on the borders of things. That, however, does not ensure its use as a teaching approach in the future. If that is to happen, then the words of Sue Bender in *Everyday Sacred*, "It doesn't always have to be so hard," should apply to interdisciplinary planning. This leads to tremendous implications for teachers who are looking for better ways to teach and might not think of an interdisciplinary approach.

Even though interdisciplinary lessons remain fleeting, momentary, minimal, and minor, resurgent interest in interdisciplinary learning is a constant. It might be precipitated by some inspiring learning experiences or by some theory of cognition that supports attaining higher-order thinking skills through mapping across disciplines. So in spite of the difficulty in devising and executing interdisciplinary curriculum and the reduced likelihood of it "catching on," it still holds the glimmer of restructuring possibility. That is not surprising because, by its nature, it is one of the most viable alternatives to enriching the currently criticized standards-based teach-to-improve-the-test-scores curriculum being mandated across a country that has been described as a nation that is educationally at risk.

Interdisciplinary experiences take learning beyond just coverage in the "dead end" linear approach. The good news for English leadership is the ease with which the study of language arts logically becomes the interdisciplinary companion to many other subjects, in part because the English language arts classroom has long been interdisciplinary in content and activity. It draws from a wide variety of sources, many of which reflect the personal encounters students have with the literature and writing and other works of art, thereby focusing on quality rather than quantity.

Evidence of a continuous interest in interdisciplinary learning over the last ten years can be found in curriculum development guides, journal articles, and testimonials from educators and students, especially those who have had firsthand experience. Articles about interdisciplinary learning seem to fall into two categories, those based on experience (Nelson, 1995) and those based on theory (Jacobs, 1989). In either case, the reports are usually enthused about the kind of learning that took or could take place and the awareness that the students had or could have had of the authenticity and connected quality of the learning.

In contrast to the press it receives, deliberate interdisciplinary curriculum is not likely to be found as the widespread basis for high school instructional programs today. In spite of the fact that such courses are the kind that students rave about for years after they have taken them, you would be lucky to find a given school with even one team-taught art and literature course that is quietly giving students the opportunity to publish a magazine where they display their appreciation of written and visual art. Most likely, this course is taught by two teachers who have worked together through the years, who will spend weekends and vacations evaluating submissions and

planning. Chances are, the course will just stop being offered the year the teachers involved are just too tired of the fund-raising efforts needed to keep publication going. Thus, it seems that although interdisciplinary learning has been proposed and praised repeatedly for its potential to restructure teaching and learning communities, to increase student motivation and participation, and to encourage collaboration and cooperative learning, it has not been adopted for high school programs in any significant way. It is also evident that in high school interdisciplinary courses, teachers need to be invested far beyond what is reasonable to ask.

Granted, the interdisciplinary approach is more prevalent in the elementary classroom, but that is at the expense of one teacher's enormous preparation. At the middle school level, interdisciplinary teaching is not only challenging but close to impossible when teams meet more about student behavior and performance than about mapping where the curriculum might integrate. Thus, interdisciplinary experiences remain the surprising exception to the high school curricular rule, and the expected ripple effect of interdisciplinary learning experience—from individual lessons into full-blown curriculum—remains one that never takes hold, primarily because of the nature and demands of the approach.

A Small National Sample

School systems are only lightly peppered with interdisciplinary classes that are working well. Hence come the details of the failures. There are the English and social studies teachers who could not reconcile the differences in their final assessments: one assessment stressed content and the other stressed analysis. There are also the many fine art and English teams who have given up in despair because, although the course came together easily and the students performed in an outstanding way, the obstacles to planning, preparation, and evaluation in typical teaching schedules outweighed the results.

Some of the particulars of the prospects and pitfalls of interdisciplinary learning were gathered in a small national sample at NCTE's Annual Spring Conference in New York City on March 16–18, 2000, where I surveyed participants in a roundtable presentation that I led on interdisciplinary learning. The first item on the survey was a question: Briefly describe your work setting, experience, and responsibilities. The participants came from private and public schools representing grades 6–12 from states all over the country. Most of the participants were classroom teachers, and if they were English chairs or leaders, they had teaching responsibilities as well. The teaching experience of the group ranged from 2–34 years. The combinations of interdisciplinary courses in which the participants had experience were most often English and social studies; English, social studies, and art; and American Studies, so the respondents were mostly practicing teachers with firsthand interdisciplinary teaching experience. American Studies, as a course, was not defined. It is assumed that it is a combination of American literature and history as outlined in a recent guide from the American Studies Association (Rudnick, 1997).

> ***The whole process requires teachers to be observers, to be willing to go off in unexpected ways, and to allow the students to do the same as they discover knowledge in seemingly unrelated places.***

The next item on the survey was a question: What prompts the current interest, and what seems to be the sustained interest over the years, in interdisciplinary teaching and learning? Comments included the cognitive and authentic effects of interdisciplinary curriculum on the single disciplines, the students, and the teachers: an interdisciplinary approach is effective; it makes connections and connects literature to life; the academic value of the arts is legitimized; learning is more connected resulting in stronger meaning; students are more intellectually and emotionally engaged; students learn, accept, and remember more readily and are provided the necessity of seeing across a variety of areas; it affords the opportunity for one-on-one teacher collaboration. One respondent said that the standards in her state highlight the need for an interdisciplinary approach. Unfortunately, there is no way to determine to which state she was referring.

The next item on the survey asked respondents to briefly describe their interest in interdisciplinary teaching and learning, asking for personal anecdotes. Many of the respondents stated that although they might be in the early stages of teaching a formal interdisciplinary course, they frequently incorporated such things as art and music into their teaching. What first prompted them to do this might have been a desire to experiment or to share a personal interest or expertise. What kept them committed to the practice was the excitement and engagement they witnessed on the part of the students who participated in the interdisciplinary experience. Keep in mind that the conference participants were English teachers who, in contrast to teachers of other academic disciplines, might have been more likely to experiment with integrating other arts with the arts of writing and literature.

The last item on the survey was a question: With all it has to offer learners, why hasn't interdisciplinary teaching and learning caught on in a larger way? The reasons given were not surprising and can be supported by research. Many of the obstacles listed had implications for leadership. One respondent said it was a challenge to schedule an interdisciplinary

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class in a small school. Another said it was just hard to organize. Some complained that they have to push their schedule to make it work. It was not clear whether that meant pushing the teacher's daily schedule to get everything done or pushing the idea of an alternate class schedule to others; in either case, the demands on teachers were formidable. Many respondents complained about not having enough time for teachers to work together or the feeling that the inflexibility or lack of knowledge of another teacher was hindering the process. Others commented on the difficulty of finding two teachers who are willing to share everything in the classroom experience or who have a clear "chemistry." Some noted that administrators who change from year to year or don't support the program's special needs and student resistance to anything outside the norm of compartmentalized subjects all add to the challenges. Finally, the respondents emphasized the need for release time for planning.

Requirements for Success

If the success of interdisciplinary curriculum relies on scheduling, release time for planning, teacher matches, and support in the process of implementation, the implications for the role leaders can play in supporting interdisciplinary restructuring are enormous. If, in fact, teachers can be found who are willing to teach interdisciplinary courses, leaders could respond by attending to the mechanics of scheduling, the support for release time, and whatever else is needed for implementation. Even the paradigm shift imminent in melding single subjects could be the substance of administrative conversations, directions, and staff development (in the form of study, focus, and action research groups). Leaders need to nurture and support these teacher pioneers—struggling or succeeding. Success is proportional to the amount of support teachers are given to deliver the experiences. Therefore, implications for leadership seem tangential to the success or failure of not only the implementation but also the continuation of interdisciplinary teaching and learning.

Inconclusive Research

Given the perceived disadvantages, is it any wonder that interdisciplinary courses have not been more successful and have not registered on the Richter Scale of education? Until the data is gathered and the results of interdisciplinary learning can be shown to correspond to higher test results, the call to interdisciplinary learning will fall on deaf ears. In many schools in New York State, for example, the emphasis seems to be on designing curriculum that can be easily tied not only to standards but also to the results of the tests. Unfortunately, there is not much conclusive research to take back to New York on interdisciplinary curriculum, let alone on its results and its manifestations on final assessments.

Leaders need to nurture and support these teacher pioneers—struggling or succeeding. Success is proportional to the amount of support teachers are given to deliver the experiences.

Research on interdisciplinary learning has been surveyed in a recent Center on English Learning & Achievement (CELA) study.

> It is doubly surprising, given this wide range of support, that there is little research that looks closely at interdisciplinary teaching. The literature largely consists of anecdotal and classroom-based accounts, as well as opinion papers, "how-to" suggestions, and definition pieces. The field is thus both large and ill-defined. Moreover, it is complicated by a lack of shared vocabulary and a distinct absence of a body of past research that would help to formulate a much-needed theoretical framework (Adler & Flihan, 1997, p.1).

The research is scarce, and what has been reported does not even share a common vocabulary. There are all kinds of differences in meaning when terms such as interdisciplinary and integrated are used (Adler & Flihan, 1997). In addition to establishing of a framework for talking about and examining interdisciplinary learning experiences, participants must also adjust to a paradigm shift in pedagogy.

> Curriculum integration is not simply an organizational device requiring cosmetic changes or realignments in lesson plans across various subject areas. Rather, it is a way of thinking about what schools are for, about the sources of curriculum, and about the uses of knowledge. Curriculum integration begins with the idea that the sources of curriculum ought to be problems, issues, and concerns posed by life itself (Beane, p. 616).

Aligning separate subjects, although a starting point to the enactment of interdisciplinary curriculum, might not be enough without a total vision for the educational environment in which the alignment will happen. An interdisciplinary approach is larger than the sum of its parts.

Obstacles to Interdisciplinary Curriculum

Many of the obstacles to interdisciplinary learning, including disruption of teacher autonomy and "doubting Thomas" students, are site-based. Depending on whether or not students are tracked by ability, interdisciplinary courses can be seen by some teachers as competing with longer-established AP courses for a segment of the student population (Adler & Flihan, 1997). Other obstacles are too broad to be controlled in individual school settings. James A. Beane, professor of education at the National College of Education, National-Louis

University at Evanston, Illinois, who has written a considerable amount on the subject, identifies four factors that protect the separate-subject approach to the curriculum:

1. Faculty and teacher educators in higher education, state- and district-level subject supervisors, test publishers, and subject-area associations and others whose titles and office doors often signify particular subject areas;
2. Parents and other adults who are reluctant to embrace versions of the curriculum that depart from what they remember;
3. Teachers and supervisors inside the schools who often build their identities along subject-matter lines;
4. An increasingly right-wing public (1995, p. 619).

Adding to the challenges from professionals, parents, and the public is the ease of doing things the way they have always been done. Even with all of the new information on cognition, the factory model continues to fragment learning and shape curriculum design (Mathison & Freeman, 1998). Schools of education do not prepare their graduates for interdisciplinary teaching any more than textbooks do. In order to really incorporate interdisciplinary curriculum, more than a superficial match must be made.

> Curriculum integration does not just mean doing the same things differently but doing something different. It has its own theories of purpose, knowledge, and learning and is able to stand on those without the necessity of standing on the corpse of the separate subject approach (Beane, 1995, p. 619).

Even the wording of educational initiatives such as Goals 2000 reinforces separate subject instruction:

> Our adult world is not carved up by subject content areas—why should children's learning be divided this way? Focusing only on the content students need to know in English, history, mathematics, the sciences and so on—an approach that the Goals 2000 legislation further sanctifies—ignores basic questions about the changing nature of knowledge, how students learn, what's really worth knowing, and the essential competencies for life in the 21st century (Wagner, 1997, p. 172).

All of these obstacles, whether site-based or broader, need to be seriously considered by school leadership if the move to interdisciplinary learning is to come about.

The changing makeup of the current teaching force complicates interdisciplinary matters even further. At one end of the spectrum, we must deal with the anticipated exodus of large numbers of veteran teachers reaching retirement age, possibly one-third of the current teaching force. At the other end of the spectrum, we are told that close to one-third of new teachers leave the profession after 1–2 years of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Even the most supportive of leadership situations can't overcome serious shortages of teachers and administrators. "Even when districts are willing to support staff with planning time, staff development and additional compensation for collaborating, the lack of continuity in staffing undermines the effort" (Adler & Flihan, 1997, p. 15).

The absence of a framework from which to evaluate interdisciplinary possibilities makes it increasingly difficult for leaders to jump on the interdisciplinary bandwagon.

Last but not least, the absence of a framework from which to evaluate interdisciplinary possibilities makes it increasingly difficult for leaders to jump on the interdisciplinary bandwagon. This is all the more reason for leaders to support some experimentation and risk-taking on the local level. Otherwise, the jury on the value of interdisciplinary curriculum will always be out.

Leaders Supporting Interdisciplinary Curriculum

Leaders need to be reverent about curriculum and its awesome power to impact on young minds. With the recent episodes of violence in schools, leaders must remember that teachers are literally in the "front lines." To extend the frightening metaphor a bit further, the one line of defense that teachers have always had is the curriculum. Teachers can be trained in any number of things that attempt to address the ills in our schools, such as asset building or school safety or trust, but putting aside for a moment the personal relationships and the modeling teachers do with students, the single most important potentially powerful impact teachers can have on students is through the curriculum. For that reason alone, it should be outstanding, not planned backwards from the state testing results. If teachers cannot always personally impact on students, what is being done in the classroom can. Curriculum design is the starting point for physically safe, emotionally nurturing, and intellectually exceptional school environments.

School leaders must understand that there is a great deal to discover about interdisciplinary curriculum. What we know for sure is that, just like everything else in education, interdisciplinary curriculum cannot be a top-down mandate. Darling-Hammond summarizes: "... when people are asked merely to implement ideas handed down to them by others, these ideas are bound to be poorly understood and mistrusted unless people have an opportunity to create adaptations that will be valued and appropriate in the local context" (1997, p. 223). Sharing the interdisciplinary experiences that

some teachers have had and giving teachers the opportunity to make small connections might persuade teachers to subscribe to this type of learning with their hearts as well as their minds.

At the very least, it takes good leaders to foster interdisciplinary or any other kind of change. John P. Kotter of the Harvard Business School defines leadership: "Leadership isn't planning. Leadership isn't a better organization chart and better controls. Leadership is helping a group develop a sense of where it is going, a vision of the future, strategies of getting all of the critical players to understand that and to buy into it deep into their hearts" (Dobrzynski, 1995, p. 14). So the first task of school leaders who are interested in curricular reform is to make sure their leadership style will permit growth in others.

The leaders also need to know what interdisciplinary learning is all about. They need to know what they are supporting. They need to know what interdisciplinary curriculum requires and what kind of leadership commitment constitutes support. Leaders cannot expect teachers to collaborate without planning time; liking something is not enough of an investment to make it work. Interdisciplinary teaching and learning is not a teaching strategy or another graphic organizer with multiple classroom applications. It does not "mean doing the same things differently but doing something different" (Beane, 1995, p. 619). Leaders have to be prepared to give more than just lip service to teachers' efforts.

The job of the school leaders in supporting interdisciplinary curriculum might vary in some respects depending on the context in which the leaders work. One of the first things leaders need to do is to find out what is going on in their districts with interdisciplinary learning. It would be useful to find out at least three things: whether there are any successful interdisciplinary courses at the secondary level, whether any teams of teachers are informally collaborating, and whether any individual teachers successfully use interdisciplinary approaches in any part of their teaching. Leaders might begin by doing a needs assessment or helping to organize focus groups and action research within their districts. It would also be useful to find success stories in other school districts.

In Conclusion

Sadly, like many of my colleagues, I gave up the struggle to implement interdisciplinary curriculum because implementation at the lesson-stage level, let alone the curriculum level, just became too hard—too hard to juggle meeting times for planning meaningful learning opportunities; too hard to risk deviating from the proscribed, approved, and final-assessment-bound curriculum to explore uncharted interdisciplinary connections; too hard to accomplish all that needed to be accomplished to create, put forth, reflect upon, evaluate, and refine enough lessons to establish and justify a curriculum.

In *1776: A Musical Play*, John Adams asks, "Is anybody there? Does anybody care?" These are the questions teachers launching interdisciplinary learning need answered from the top down. As others experienced in interdisciplinary teaching might testify, teachers involved with this approach often experiment, one lesson at a time, with or without support from school leadership. I must admit that, although I have not given up my belief in the value of an interdisciplinary teaching approach, I generally now pursue it in my own classroom without the benefit of working with other teachers. In such endeavors, I am following more of an elementary school model: one teacher bringing in materials from many disciplines rather than allowing teachers of other subjects to bring their expertise to me. As this bittersweet testimonial suggests, I am still smitten with the approach.

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Exercising the Challenges of Curricular Integration

by Adrian Rodgers, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio

A National Reform Agenda

The United States has witnessed a number of attempts to reform education in the late twentieth century, and several of these have focused on curricular reform. These reforms often begin with observations—whether it be a large-scale international research study that concludes that American education is wide in scope but shallow in content, or an individual teacher who sees a need for more authentic approaches to teaching, curriculum integration has been proposed as a way to focus the work of teachers so that student learning can be enhanced.

Although curricular reform mandates may work to improve student learning on a school, district, state, or even national level, administrators must also pay close attention to the impact of curriculum integration on the work of individual teachers within their classroom context. Unless the challenges of implementing a reform are understood at the classroom level, an administrator may never know why something that looked good during the planning phase did not look as enticing during the implementation phase.

It is not surprising that classroom teachers should find themselves as key agents for reform initiatives. The Holmes Group (1986, p. 3), a consortium of large American Colleges of Education with a reform orientation, explains: "America's dissatisfaction with its schools has become chronic and epidemic. Teachers have long been at the center of the debates, and they still are today. . . ." It is not surprising that, because teachers are seen as the one group who can play the most powerful role in reform, the National Commission for Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 1996, p. vi) bases one of its "three simple premises" on the claim that "what teachers know and can do is the most important influence" on what students can learn, and therefore on educational reform. Because the onus has been placed on teachers as front-line change agents, they must understand how change works in the context of the individual classroom.

A Context for Professional Development

For a number of years, I have collaborated with a veteran English teacher who lives in the same city as I do. Dave (my agreement with the school district dictates the use of pseudonyms) and I first met at a large state research university where I was a doctoral student. As I got to know Dave, it became apparent that he was not a typical English teacher. He had taught English in public schools for 29 years but recently became interested in questions regarding professional development. As a result of his interest, and because the university and large urban school district that employed him had a partnership agreement, Dave was released from his school teaching responsibilities 50% of the time so that he could work as a teacher-in-residence at the university.

How We Looked at Curriculum Integration

As a part of school and district reform initiatives, Dave's school recently implemented a block scheduling arrangement that consisted of three two-hour periods. In an effort to further study the effects of the two-hour periods and to promote curriculum integration, the school obtained an $85,000 grant. The grant funds were used to hire teachers over the summer so that they could collaborate with each other and identify opportunities for curriculum integration across content areas. Additionally, funds were used to bring the teachers together for one-day retreats during the school year in order to monitor the success of the initiative.

Over the course of a semester, I spoke with teachers active in the curriculum integration initiative in order to understand what they hoped to gain from reform. They identified possibilities that might be realized from rethinking their curriculum. For them, curriculum integration:

1. makes sense because it is more coherent for students and teachers.
2. structures history, English, and other subjects in a way that can compliment a chronological approach.
3. is a more authentic approach: less survey—more depth.
4. can act as a catalyst for instructional change.
5. might promote student learning in one area by scaffolding student learning in another.

Although Dave and I were excited by the opportunity to study how curriculum integration could work, we also knew from our studies of professional development that there was a lot to be learned from the challenges and pitfalls regarding the implementation of reform initiatives. As a result, Dave and I agreed that while there were lots of things that worked well in the curriculum integration initiative, we would study instead the challenges associated with its implementation at the classroom level. With this focus, "problems were now our friend" (Fullan, 1993), and difficulty was a thing to be celebrated, since the identification of both would lead us to a robust understanding of the difficulties of implementing reform.

Each weekend for 13 weeks, Dave and I met for two to three hours to collaboratively plan a unit for the upcoming week. One or both of us taught each day, and we debriefed for 15 to 30 minutes after each lesson to

make sense of our experiences, construct an understanding as to what had occurred, and decide how we would respond in the future. I audiotaped and wrote field notes during these activities.

My case study employed a "participant-observer" approach to action research (Patton, 1990). Both the cooperating teacher and I adopted Glesne and Peshkin's (1992) view that we did not have to act as *either* participants *or* observers. Instead, we could act as *both* observers *and* as participants, moving back and forth on a continuum of possibilities where we might be more of one than the other at any given time. I employed the participant-observer method described above by using action research as my methodology. By action research, I mean a repetitive cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988). Sprinthall, Reiman, and Thies-Sprinthall (1996, p. 694) explain that educators frame action research as . . .

> inquiry done by practitioners with the help of a consultant.... They attribute four characteristics to action research: (1) It is collaborative, (2) it addresses practical classroom problems, (3) it bolsters professional development, and (4) it requires a specialized structure to ensure both time and support for the research initiative.

The action research methodology, with its emphasis on collaboration, practical classroom problems, and professional development, was well suited to our belief that our work must be viewed through a constructivist lens—a lens that helped us account for how experienced teachers accept, resist, or ignore change and how we constructed our understandings of professional development.

Struggling with Integration

Dave and I made a lot of the preparations to observe curriculum integration in his grade 9 class prior to the beginning of the school year, but on the Friday before the first day of school, Dave got a telephone call from his principal. Because of some last-minute changes in the school's master schedule, a grade 12 English class had become available. Dave had unsuccessfully sought a grade 12 teaching assignment for many years. He knew that planning at this late date would be a challenge, but he accepted the offer. As a result, Dave was thrust into a situation where he wanted to attempt curriculum integration in a course with which he was unfamiliar. I had a little familiarity with some of the literature, which helped, but Dave and I struggled continuously with the gray cloud of his last-minute decision.

Our struggles to integrate the English curriculum with other content areas were compounded not only by our limited knowledge of the textbook's literary selections, but also by the design of the textbook. Our first extensive thinking about the grade 12 English curriculum was when we picked up a copy of the only textbook available. This 1,052-page anthology entitled *English Literature with World Masterpieces* (1989) included some samples of work by the ancient Greeks and then took a chronological approach to literature including everything from *Beowulf* to Beckett. We immediately found at least three difficulties with the book:

- The kinds of literary selections that were included seemed to be less than ideal choices for the backgrounds and interests of the students with whom we were working.
- The literary selections were abridged to the extent that they lacked significance.
- The large size of the book made it hard to use, and it was intimidating to many students, since the literacy levels within the class varied widely.

> ***We could act as both observers and as participants, moving back and forth on a continuum of possibilities where we might be more of one than the other at any given time.***

When confronted with this kind of text, one of my first suggestions to Dave was that we abandon the book and look for another text. We hoped that there might be an alternative that contained selections that would better serve not only our English teaching, but our attempts to integrate the other content areas. Dave explained that this was our only option, since the anthology had been selected for use throughout the district several years earlier by an assistant superintendent who believed that all graduating students should be provided with English instruction that would equip them for college-level work. It seemed to me that, while this was a wonderful goal, this text really didn't foster the kind of literary appreciation that would be useful in college. Moreover, such an expectation privileged college careers over the technology careers that many of our students planned to pursue. We wanted students to engage with literature regardless of their future careers, and this text served as a barrier to that goal.

I tried to make more sense of the textbook selection issue by talking with other teaching staff who were involved in the curriculum integration project. Those teachers told me that most of their students were not college bound, and that they "just wanted the kids to keep reading." Despite this claim, few of the students ever actually got to read a book because the English curriculum was delivered from an anthology. Indeed, in spite of the project's focus on developing an integrated curriculum based on block scheduling, it seemed like the curriculum itself had not changed very much at all.

Other Challenges to Curriculum Integration

There were a number of additional problems posed by the context of the school that challenged our attempts to develop a more integrated approach with other subject areas. One of these difficulties was the culture of the English department and the way in which its traditions influenced Dave's thinking about the curriculum. The last-minute nature of Dave's assignment to the grade 12 English course meant that he had to develop a curricular approach very fast. He consulted with other teachers on lesson planning, many of whom recommended intensive vocabulary instruction, so for the first third of the course, Dave relied on alphabetically arranged lists of words from a "vocabulary packet" published in the 1960s. As Dave gained more experience, he moved away from the published packet and developed his own lists of vocabulary words that supported curricular integration to a degree, but in a decontextualized way. While this approach might have worked well with curricular integration, in that the vocabulary of subject areas other than English could have been studied in English class, a large amount of instructional time was spent on this task. As a result, Dave used approximately 30 minutes of class time each day to review a set of 20 vocabulary words, culminating in a test at the end of the week. Each new week brought a new list. By the end of the course, approximately 20–25% of the 128 hours of instructional time had been used to study approximately 220 vocabulary words.

Technology was a part of the curriculum integration initiative at the school, and Dave tried to foster this by using the computer room in his writing assignments. Unfortunately, the computer room contained many defective computers with limited hard disk space. The machines were prone to crashing and, on average, one student per class would lose a period's worth of work because of a computer malfunction. The machines were connected to two slow, aging dot-matrix printers, which meant that students would often have long waits to print their work. As a result, students often took two to three days to type a two-page rough draft of an essay. Since the students found it difficult to compose in the computer room, they would typically hand write their work in class and then go to the computer room to type it up. That meant that the students' time in the computer room was largely limited to data entry.

I assumed that the poor state of the equipment, the lack of instructional support, and the inaccessibility of the Internet were due to the financial state of the district. However, when I conferred with Dave, he informed me that the school did, in fact, have two state-of-the-art computer rooms, but they were reserved only for science instruction. Indeed, although some science classes were a part of the curriculum integration initiative at the school, those with a stranglehold on the better computers were not a part of it.

Learning from Our Challenges

The National Commission for Teaching and America's Future has identified the lack of school-embedded professional development opportunities as the target of reform initiatives. A number of educational reformers agree that an investigation of professional development opportunities is in order, but too frequently reform focuses on system- or school-wide initiatives. My study is one of a few studies that examines what occurs when two teachers work in close collaboration over a long period using alternative approaches with a research-oriented focus on their teaching embedded in ongoing professional development initiatives in a challenging inner-city context.

Such a study is important because it is one of a handful that examines what happens when teachers engage in the kinds of extended and closely collaborative professional development initiatives endorsed by many reformers.

The net effect of the large number of reform initiatives at the school would seem to place Midwest High School at the forefront of educational reform in its district. Yet, a number of elements necessary for reform were noticeably absent. Often these factors were outside of our control, including the institutional limitations that constrained Dave's and my conceptualization of teaching within the school's culture. Surely, for a professional development school active in a number of initiatives, more could have been done to support Dave in his lesson preparation and teaching. It is alarming that the virtually nonexistent support offered by the school and district has been touted as being on the forefront of professional development.

As Dave and I planned, he turned to a number of sources for assistance. For example, Dave heeded the advice of his fellow teachers and, for the most part, followed the chronological order of the textbook they suggested. Additionally, he followed their direction to place a considerable amount of emphasis on vocabulary. Thus, whether he wanted to or not, Dave had a lot of support for following a traditional curriculum based on teacher presentation of information, rather than one that integrates student learning among subject areas.

In order for us to fully implement curriculum integration, additional supports were needed: more careful assignment of teachers to classes; a concomitant emphasis on planning time with the cadre of teachers who were also attempting curriculum integration; teacher selection of additional curricular materials that would be both relevant to the students and useful for implementing an integrated approach; and more careful thinking about how technology can be infused into the curriculum integration initiative, rather than added on. Dave and I both felt we did not need training in technology so

much as we needed supports to allow us to rethink our curriculum with colleagues, enabling us to use technology as a medium for learning rather than as an instructional tool.

This study has implications related to both curriculum integration in general, and English education in particular. Certainly this study illustrates the complexity of professional development initiatives. Hundert (1996, p. 211) has suggested that "three conditions of the teacher's work environment seem to impede the institutionalization of collaborative initiatives for site-based staff development: isolation, time constraints, and traditional role definition." Time constraints and Dave's interpretation of his role as one who should maintain the scholastic traditions of the English program were impediments that I did not initially consider when I began this study. These impediments have even greater significance since this study took place in a school that was committed to professional development through a number of initiatives.

Although the curriculum integration initiative that took place at Dave's school had a number of wonderful successes, Dave and I chose instead to examine our challenges so that we could celebrate a more complicated understanding of professional development. We concluded that a school and teacher's involvement in professional development does not, by itself, negate impediments to change; reform at the school district and building levels must connect to classroom practices if change in the way that students are taught is to be realized.

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Tales from the Front: Experiments with Interdisciplinary Instruction

by Laura Smith, New Trier High School, Winnetka, Illinois

First Impressions

I stood with great bravado in front of the 52 wide-eyed, overly ambitious freshmen. They glanced back and forth at their two teachers, but they quickly learned that they did not need to focus their attention on me. I, the typically comfortable and proud public speaker, did not know quite what to say. To be honest, I did not even have a solid understanding of how this team-taught course would work. And I certainly did not know how to negotiate the two very different personalities that would be leading the masses toward a greater appreciation of ancient culture.

At first, Todd and I were as different as night and day. A former naval officer, he was demanding, uncompromising, and knew everything there was to know about ancient history and literature. An aspiring songwriter and idealist, I was passionate, caring, and still had a lot to learn about both subjects.

First impressions can be deceiving.

The Path toward Interdisciplinary Instruction

I was first introduced to interdisciplinary instruction in college. My professor used technology to explore the interaction between art, literature, and history in late 19th-century America. I was mesmerized from the start and immediately vowed to pursue a teaching career in a school that valued collaboration among disciplines. My dream came true as soon as I graduated. Well, kind of.

In 1996, I was hired to teach social studies, literature, and science at an inner-city alternative school. The school itself was only funded for 27 students, students who were returning to earn their GEDs. We had no textbooks, no library, and no specified curriculum, so I used the newspaper as the foundation of my daily instruction. This led to a natural—and necessary—integration of reading strategies and social studies discussions, of writing instruction and simple science experiments. My enthusiasm waned quickly, however. With no one to bounce ideas off of, very limited resources, and students who were more concerned about staying alive than learning about the

digestive system, my efforts seemed futile. Despite these setbacks, I was still convinced that interdisciplinary instruction was natural and provocative. If only I had the resources and the mentoring at my fingertips.

An abundance of resources appeared on my doorstep in 1999. My department chair at New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois, offered me an opportunity to work with an honors freshman English–history team course. I accepted enthusiastically. Finally I would have the chance to work with and learn from another professional; finally I would have access to the knowledge and materials that I had longed for at my previous schools. My department chair warned me, however, that this relationship would be a marriage of sorts, and that with such a union, obstacles might present themselves. I never thought that would apply to me; I get along with people pretty well. Why should it be any different with a rational, intelligent teacher like Todd?

Todd had taught this class before with a few different partners, and during our summer planning meetings, I viewed his expertise with awe. He professed encyclopedic knowledge of ancient literary texts that I was only vaguely familiar with. While I wanted to spout verses of Yehuda Amichai and Gwendolyn Brooks and explore contemporary multicultural writings, these simply were not relevant to our course. Later, I would find ways to include them, but during those initial meetings, my anxiety ballooned. How was I going to learn all of this by September?

The first few weeks of school were tenuous and uncomfortable. I didn't know quite how to place myself within the classroom, or how to establish myself as an authority to the students or to my partner. I followed Todd's lead most of the time and often got frustrated by my insecurity, my lack of knowledge, and the sheer size of the class. As a result, I took every opportunity possible to separate the two classes and try to prove myself worthy of my professional title. In these secret sessions with the students, I also tried tirelessly to inject more of my passion for "literature for literature's sake" into the history-dominated course.

We struggled furiously during the first two months in a debate about one of the core English texts in the course. From a history perspective, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe presents concepts that are far beyond the scope of our ancient history/literature course. The curriculum ends at about A.D.1500, long before the colonialism wave of the 1900s started to affect African tribes. From an English perspective, the book presents a wealth of rich cultural and social issues that spark powerful discussion, and Achebe's distinct writing style provides a rather provoking model for the student's own writing. However, at that time I still was not comfortable enough with the course to defend the book eloquently. Regardless, it did not coincide with the history curriculum. After weeks of course committee conversations, frustrated retreats into my department chair's office, and all-out avoidance, we asserted that because it was a core text, it needed to remain on our reading list for the year.

The problem was...that we had not presented them with the necessary writing and problem-solving strategies they needed to address such a complex task.

The remnants of that uncomfortable tension between Todd and me had a surprising effect. The bitter debate over *Things Fall Apart* that consumed us last winter led to a reconsideration of the entire freshman history curriculum. This year, we will pilot a quarter-long Africa study that covers ancient history, colonialism, and current affairs; now I will be able to introduce a much wider range of literary texts.

In late September, we introduced our first joint essay assignment: *Choose one archetype presented in either "Enuma Elish" or "Gilgamesh." In a well-developed essay, respond to the following question. How well does this archetype reflect the values of the Mesopotamian culture?* Todd had crafted this question the year before, and it seemed to exemplify the interdisciplinary approach we espoused. For the students, though, this was a foray into a completely new style of thinking and writing.

Our class was comprised of students who had most likely sailed through their previous English classes and who tended to throw up their hands in frustration if an answer wasn't immediately accessible or if they received a grade lower than A-. Needless to say, the students reacted violently that day. Some argued that the question was too confusing; others looked at us with panicked stares. I questioned whether it was too hard, whether Todd was expecting too much. But I realized quickly that the problem was not just that the task was extremely different from anything they had been asked to tackle before, but that we had not presented them with the necessary writing and problem-solving strategies they needed to address such a complex task. The students' work reflected this accordingly.

The second time through, we did things a lot differently.

This year, Todd and I spent a week and a half walking the students through this assignment together. We modeled strategies for understanding essay questions, brainstorming, creating thesis statements, outlining, and knowing how and when to use evidence. We stressed consistently that this would be a struggle for most of them, and we even read excerpts of the "How I survived E/H" essays that last year's class had written. We still had a small group of students who

tried to fall back on their old ways, but there were many who exceeded our expectations.

First Impressions Reconsidered

I now realize that first impressions can be a bit deceiving. This year, Todd and I work together to encourage the students to struggle through their first solid thesis statements, to challenge their own Western beliefs about culture and religion, and to lament and rejoice about student performances. We "argue" openly in front of the class about Siddhartha's decision to leave his father and embark on a quest for enlightenment and about Telemachus' attempts, or lack thereof, to protect his dominion. And we struggle to find a way to both challenge our students' thinking and respect their developmental capabilities.

A unique energy pervades the classroom now, an energy that infects both teachers and students. The students view Todd and me as equals, but they respect the differences that we bring to our positions. We still have far to go and many frustrations to untangle, but we have survived the hurdles that our first-year union presented. And finally, the borders of our respective disciplines have begun to melt into each other. Yesterday, I introduced Hinduism through a creation myth, and today, Todd began the class discussion of *Siddhartha*.

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Interdisciplinary Teaching: The War of the Titans?

by Michael A. Bancroft, Central Methodist College, Fayette, Missouri

When interviewing a teaching candidate a few years ago for a position in one of our interdisciplinary teams, I explained the general situation and asked the candidate what his impressions of such an assignment were. He quipped, "Sounds like the war of the Titans!" This became a watchword for me as I helped lead our efforts at interdisciplinary teaching.

My forays into this "war" began over 25 years ago. My district already had an interdisciplinary course entitled American Culture in place. One history and one English teacher wed U. S. history and language arts in a team-taught course that was taught in a chronological fashion. While the delivery was a bit unusual, the content was solidly traditional. As a language arts teacher, I used nonfiction and original sources in addition to traditional literary texts to teach reading and analytical skills. Writing instruction focused on responding to these texts in a variety of ways. My history colleague taught traditionally with assignments from a history text, maps, and supplementary reading. It never occurred to us to break out of the box that this traditional content prescribed.

As time passed on, so did the course in our building, but in the late '80s another colleague and I discussed the possibility of resurrecting the course. Students enrolled and we were on our way. We made only a few modifications in the course outline, but our careers were changed forever.

The first hurdle was meshing teaching styles. Bill was a traditional teacher. He had a great command of the historical information, and he could relate it well to students. I was less traditional. As an English teacher, my practice had evolved in the direction of reader response and writing process methods. In addition to these potential sources of conflict, we did not entirely view classroom management in the same way. The "little" war was on. Our discussion (intense, but amiable) seemed to always occur in the teacher's workroom. The secretary there dubbed us Siskel and Ebert! Yet, before the semester was out, we had come to close agreement on most matters. We also came to respect the difference in teaching styles we brought to the classroom. Bill was organized and linear; I was fluid and global. Yet, we pushed ourselves to develop activities that would require students to demonstrate a great deal of content. The weakness in the approach became evident when parent questionnaires indicated that Bill was perceived as the "real teacher."

The following year, we came under the influence of Bill Spady's work, as well as Ted Sizer's Common Principles. As we grappled with these ideas, our practice began to change and focus on larger issues. For example, given national and state standards, and the questions the reformers raised about what it is that students need to know, be able to do, and be like, we knew that our curriculum needed closer scrutiny. At the same time, other teachers expressed interest in moving in this direction. As the subject area coordinators in our building, we led a series of discussions about embracing interdisciplinary teaching on a larger scale. Our first effort attempted to wed world history, English, and biology at the tenth-grade level. Despite hours of work subsidized by the district through grants, this effort broke down. The science teachers could not find an organizing principle that would allow for such integration.

The history and English teachers, however, found that the efforts had been fruitful and wanted to continue. They developed a course that wedded the subject areas around five broad questions that were to inform the world history experience at both traditional high schools in the district. The interdisciplinary curricu-

lum emerged because teachers in each subject area worked hard. They willingly dug into history and world literature to find ways to address the guiding questions that became the organizing principle for the curriculum. One of the questions was, "What are characteristics of human belief systems?" Students study Hinduism, Taoism, Islam, and Judaism in the context of their historical development, along with the great literature of the cultures where these religions began. This has become a required course for all sophomore students. Teachers each year negotiate such matters as class readings, types and amount of writing, and the degree of depth of subject matter. Each teacher feels that something has been lost from his or her content. Yet, when pressed, they always decide that what students learn in this kind of curriculum is richer than that through more traditional teaching.

The U. S. history and eleventh-grade English teachers also wanted to pursue this kind of approach. This was not as successful as the sophomore course has been. The teachers seemed more wedded to specific content, and they never found an organizing principle to which all would agree. They, too, organized the curriculum around guiding questions and agreed to certain common activities. Yet, they never developed the ownership and collegiality of the sophomore teachers. Individual teaching teams developed engaging and occasionally authentic tasks, yet no one was satisfied that we had developed a unified curriculum. For example, trying to decide on core literary texts became a battle between those who felt that students should have some texts in common and those who could not countenance reading whole-class novels. Another effort saw us attempting to construct common assessments for key units. While everyone agreed on a general scheme, resistance emerged as we proceeded toward concrete details. Some teams became dysfunctional as the team members' basic assumptions about teaching and students became clearer.

Each teacher feels that something has been lost from his or her content. Yet, when pressed, they always decide that what students learn in this kind of curriculum is richer than that through more traditional teaching.

After seven years, our attempts at integration are a work in progress, and skirmishes still erupt. Anyone embarking on such an endeavor must be prepared for difficulties. Time for planning is certainly a factor. However, grant money provided time for the junior teachers to collaborate, but it became evident that philosophical clashes and non-commitment would impede progress. An intriguing reality was that no one openly argued against our efforts. Yet, at times, we could not seem to get anywhere. Bill and I concluded that the shift in thinking required for this effort was nearly impossible for some of the faculty.

Early on, we involved parents in discussions of our new direction. The sophomore parents who came to the sessions had hard questions for us, but they finally endorsed our efforts. Some would still prefer stand-alone courses. They, too, worry that something is lost. The counselors would like more flexibility to place students who move in from other places, but the departments have stood firm that this experience is far superior to former ways of teaching the content. As I reflect on our efforts, I would make the following suggestions to those who embark on interdisciplinary teaching:

1. Think hard before developing a program that forces teachers into team teaching arrangements. Be open to the possibility that good teachers cannot make the leap to this kind of instruction.
2. Do not underestimate the power of inertia to impede progress.
3. Communicate! Involve all the constituents: administrators, counselors, parents, and students.
4. Do not assume that teachers think globally enough to see connections between or among disciplines.
5. Be careful to lay out curricular foundations based on standards and learner outcomes before being wedded to content. ○

CEL Seeks Nominations

The CEL Award for Exemplary Leadership is given annually to an NCTE member who is an outstanding English language arts educator and leader. Please nominate an exceptional leader who has had an impact on the profession through one or more of the following:

- work that has focused on exceptional teaching and/or leadership practices (e.g., building effective department, grade level, or building teams; developing curriculum or processes for practicing ELA educators; or mentoring);
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- publications that have had a major impact.

Send nomination letters and a curriculum vitae by March 15, 2001 to Louann Reid, English Department, CSU, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1773. For information about the three honorees and the 2000 recipient, Jim Burke, go to the CEL Web page at www.coedu.usf.edu/cel.

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Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

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Matters of Thinking

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Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Bonita Wilcox at Miller Research Learning Center, Room 111, Edinboro, PA 16444; e-mail: bwilcox@ edinboro.edu; phone: (814) 398-2528.

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Leadership for Excellence

▷ IN THIS ISSUE

Teachers as Scholars

by Henry Kiernan

After editing *English Leadership Quarterly* for seven years, this is my final issue. Reminiscing about changes during that span of time, it is only appropriate that I "free-write" my last introduction. (Don't worry. I will edit enough along the way so that flashbacks will not mimic those said to occur during a near-death experience.) When I was privileged to receive the offer to edit the *Quarterly*, I did not know that in seven years I would become the father of the bride, move three times, change jobs twice, and travel to continents I never dreamed I would visit. As Anne Morrow Lindbergh said: "Only in growth, reform and change, paradoxically enough, is true security to be found." The *Quarterly* became one of my anchors.

There are vivid recollections of working with authors, corresponding with NCTE editors, meeting with presenters at NCTE conferences and encouraging them to tell their stories in the *Quarterly*. There were diverse educational issues to be addressed, including national and state standards, multicultural and multiethnic literature, action research, curriculum integration, technology, intellectual freedom, mentoring, and censorship. Yet with all the changes and transitions, leadership remained at the core of our authors' experiences.

Leadership is working with and through others to achieve a common vision. Each issue of the *Quarterly* offers a glimpse into how precollegiate and collegiate teachers demonstrate that leadership within themselves and their schools. Leadership development is the mission of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL), a place that is home to many of us.

The *Quarterly* is a place where the voices of teachers are clearly heard, so it is fitting that we celebrate the theme of teachers as scholars, teachers who practice what they preach by writing, researching, and sharing their work with colleagues. Pamela Snow and Kristin Leithiser are two high school teachers who set the tone by renewing the call for scholarship. Becky Girard, Frank Mandera, and Elizabeth Marchini are three elementary teachers who conducted their own research in the use of computers as an instructional tool.

The scholarship that teachers bring to the discussion of critical issues is the heart, mind, and soul of what we do. I wish Bonita Wilcox, our new editor, all the best in making the *English Leadership Quarterly* continue its rich tradition of insight, integrity, and leadership. ●

INSIDE

Lifelong Learners: Why High School English Teachers Must First Be Scholars 2
by Pamela Snow and Kristin Leithiser

Questioning Traditional Learning: Does Computer-Based Technology Enhance Academic Performance? 5
by Becky L. Girard, Frank S. Mandera, and Elizabeth J. C. Marchini

Call for Manuscripts 13/16

Executive Committee Meets in Milwaukee 15
Rick Chambers

51 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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Lifelong Learners: Why High School English Teachers Must First Be Scholars

by Pamela Snow and Kristin Leithiser, Hampden Academy, Hampden, Maine

"The elevation of the mind ought to be the principal end of all our studies, which if they do not in some measure effect, they will prove of very little service to us."

Edmund Burke (1729–1797)

All good teachers are many things to their students, and in the last 30 years, schools have assumed greater and greater liability for the "whole" student. The public now expects that along with being academicians, teachers be mentors, advisors, and facilitators, not for a small percentage of our youth, but for all of them. At the same time we are charged with fulfilling these roles, we hear the public enumerate our many failures in doing so.

Ever since the Department of Education's 1983 study that produced *A Nation at Risk*, the press, national and local leadership, and even our own communities, have found teachers and schools convenient scapegoats for a multitude of social ills. Ours is a profession defined and regulated as much by external "experts" as by its own members. It is also a profession characterized by cycles of jargon learned and jargon jettisoned, of theories embraced and theories abandoned, a profession that lately seems to emphasize methodology and technology over content—all of which are detrimental to teachers and to education. While much of what is wrong with the profession and the system that supports it is out of the control of the ordinary classroom teacher, we believe there is one area in which teachers can take control and benefit their school's public image, their students, and themselves: the area of scholarship.

> ***We believe there is one area in which teachers can take control and benefit their school's public image, their students, and themselves: the area of scholarship.***

The best teachers are those who not only understand the nature of teaching, but who also continue to be scholars throughout their teaching careers. However, in the process of increasing the responsibilities teachers have to their students, the responsibility of teachers to be scholars has diminished. Skills and behaviors like team building, problem solving, and critical thinking that youngsters once learned outside of school, and that were enhanced in the classroom, have now become the primary goal of classrooms. With the increased emphasis on teachers being facilitators of group process, on the requirement that we teach to standardized tests to keep those scores high, and with the availability of publishers' packaged units that somehow enable students to "discover" all they need to know, it might appear that there is no need for teachers to be scholars. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth.

Over the last decade, the increasing numbers of college graduates entering teaching with insufficient content knowledge has alarmed our English department. Although most have good command of the latest jargon, theory, methodology, and

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

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technology, we seldom take student teachers any more because we seldom find any with content background adequate enough to effectively instruct in our classrooms. Some we have interviewed have decided against working with us after discovering that they are expected to teach units that require acquiring and sustaining content. This does not bode well for the future of teaching.

Students of all ages and ability levels respect teachers who know something. In order to be a teacher, in the true sense of the word, a person needs to have more than a degree in education, more than theories, methods, and technology gimmicks. This is particularly vital at the secondary level where our responsibilities include not only teaching adolescents how to think, but also giving them something about which to think. The *something* comes from the teacher.

Educational theories have changed significantly since we were in high school and college, even since we began teaching. We too have changed, but one thing has not: the synergistic relationship between teaching and learning. The high school teacher is the last chance for public education to inspire and motivate—to guide and to reveal—what scholarship can mean, what a commitment to lifelong learning really is. Through example, every teacher can inspire students to work toward this end.

The High School English Teacher as Scholar

The English curriculum plays a pivotal role in every high school, teaching students reading, writing, speaking, listening, and reasoning skills—all fundamental to every other content area. As a result of this pivotal role, English teachers bear great responsibility for achieving and maintaining high levels of scholarship throughout their careers. We are largely responsible for covering the humanities, for showing students how to study and how to integrate their studies across the curriculum. For the entire four years of high school, we are responsible for 100% of the student population, and sometimes more than 100% when students double up on English classes. English teachers must elevate the so-called "average" students to aspire to greatness, and to prepare the gifted for admission to the Ivies. We are charged with inspiring 16- and 17-year-old nonreaders to appreciate literature, and with teaching the functionally illiterate how to compose coherent essays. In short, every semester, English teachers are expected to achieve outcomes that often rival the events in Genesis. And we seldom get to rest on the seventh day.

The high school teacher is the last chance for public education to inspire and motivate—to guide and to reveal—what scholarship can mean, what a commitment to lifelong learning really is.

Ours is a society infused with endless information to which students have unlimited access, including everything from pornographic Internet sites to best-selling versions of *Beowulf*. This avalanche of information, this deluge of written, spoken, acted words make it more imperative than ever that our society be more than fourth-grade literate. In the face of this onslaught, English teachers can get swamped trying to be classroom coaches, designers of cooperative and collaborative tasks, and advisors for personal dilemmas, while teaching reading, writing, speaking, listening, and reasoning skills all citizens need. Nonetheless, the high school English class is the last stop for adolescents to acquire those skills before joining the adult world of work and responsibilities.

Schools really are supposed to be places of learning. One reason students feel unempowered, resort to violence, or fail to get along is that they do not see any real-world connection to learning. Kids know when they cannot read or write. They devise all sorts of ways to cover up those failures. Students also spend most of their time in school with teachers, and they are amazingly and unerringly astute in recognizing who is and who is not committed to learning. They recognize and appreciate when their teachers are learning, too. High school English teachers sometimes have the final opportunity to teach the 18-year-old with third-grade reading skills how to use reading to learn. They are most successful in this daunting dilemma when the student recognizes them as teachers who demonstrate a love of continuous learning.

It is time for the English teaching profession to demand that its members make scholarship their first priority. English teachers in particular must be academicians who are thinkers and learners who value their own scholarship as much as that of their students. English teachers who command respect are successful scholars who engage themselves and their colleagues in research and collaboration that enhance the curriculum, and who are enthusiastic about quests for knowledge and understanding. They are also usually the most natural leaders. We are not speaking here of "leadership" as a move from classroom to front office, nor are we speaking of chairing committees, or of joining associations, or of signing up for "professional development" workshops. We are speaking of leading by example and encouragement, of leading through innovation and investigation in our classrooms and in our particular areas of expertise.

Renewing Ourselves

We know that maintaining a lifelong commitment to learning is daunting because we are underpaid and overworked. Scholarly undertakings can seem unconnected to the everyday grind of reaching 17-year-olds barely reading on third-grade level. The juggling acts with time, family, job commitments, geography, and money notwithstanding, teachers are by and large in a good position to continue scholarly pursuits after college because scholarship is a multifaceted activity. It is reading, writing, talking, researching, and whatever a learner does to keep learning, motivated by the love of learning and the love of expanding the universe inside us. Teachers are capable of being self-taught in many areas, and often forget that self-directed study is free and painless because we do it on our own schedules, under our own tutelage. In fact, we never stop practicing scholarship in our daily living, and summers are not off-season.

We have used independent study to become everything from armchair Egyptologists to American photography experts, from colonial agricultural historians to novelists. Yet we still "just teach English." Some of the best preparation for a new school year is lolling in the sun, reading and savoring, letting ourselves sink into words. We also write by scribbling poetry during faculty meetings, drafting essays between grading essays. We search beyond teachers' manuals and anthology selections, bringing to the classroom tidbits and feasts of information that inspire our students, especially those whose literacy is negligible. We spend the bulk of our preparation time on the *what* rather than the *how* of our classrooms.

Some of our scholarship comes through more organized means, such as course work or summer institutes. Individually, we have enjoyed such diverse experiences as an anthropology project in Guatemala and the National Writer's Project. The best formal study we have experienced has come from narrowly focused, content-centered institutes funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, which assumes that good teachers are good investments. They actually value us enough to pay us to learn! We always emerge from these institutes renewed and energized. Their total absorption with content is invariably followed up with discussion of how we would transfer the content to our classrooms. Filled with new knowledge and insight, we can't wait to get back to the classroom and impart what we learned to our students.

Even though we have plenty of experience on the teacher side of the desk, we still work to inspire our students as we were inspired: by teachers who know something, and who are consciously and openly looking to learn.

Influencing Students

Even though we have plenty of experience on the teacher side of the desk, we still work to inspire our students as we were inspired: by teachers who know something, and who are consciously and openly looking to learn. We remember the teachers who touched us most and taught us most were those who were scholars in their disciplines, who worked from a core of scholarship, and who approached their subject matter with reverence. They were not afraid to use the word "wonderful" when talking about a book, a play, a story, an image that they hoped we would find "wonderful," too.

We have memories of the firebrand, always pacing, never sitting, holding a much-thumbed *Henry IV, Part I*, shouting "Listen! This is wonderful!" as he brought Falstaff to life: that "...fat-kidneyed, knotty-pated, whoreson candle-mine, and sweet creature of bombast." Just as moving, but in complete contrast, are the images of the quiet, humble scholar with his own version of passion, running his hands across the pages of *Absalom! Absalom!*, his trembling voice saying softly, "This is so wonderful!"

Wonder to them meant awe, and their respect and passion moved even those who scorned the study of literature. They were teachers who looked at writers and words and learning in wonder, as a scholar does. They were learners themselves who never tired of reading more and discovering more about the literature they continued to teach year after year. From them we learned to *see* the wonder, and we regarded them and what they knew with awe. Our scholarly teachers demanded that we respect learning and knowledge. They gave us a sense of the enormity and breadth of their knowledge as well as the love of learning they modeled.

We foster a love for literature because we love literature ourselves; we love reading it, we love studying it. We show students how to write because we write ourselves. When our students produce their own work, we can relate—we can guide, explain, and inspire because we understand both the nature of writing, and the courage it takes to place one's thoughts on paper for the rest of the world to examine. We are constantly looking for experiences that enhance and enlarge our minds. We travel, write, paint, ride horseback, take and develop photographs, find adventure in life (even if it is within the pages of a book)—and we impart that sense of adventure to our students.

In teaching, we have tried to remember those who most moved us, and who most taught us, and one thing is always true: we learned most from people who were involved in and clearly loved what they taught. It wasn't so much the theory or methods they practiced that made them great teachers; rather, it was that they knew so much and loved what they knew. And we felt that love.

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Questioning Traditional Learning: Does Computer-Based Technology Enhance Academic Performance?

by Becky L. Girard, Frank S. Mandera, and Elizabeth J. C. Marchini, Olson Park Elementary School, Machesney Park, Illinois

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between computer instruction and traditional instruction in the writing process. Two writing projects were administered and scored. The first writing project involved the use of computer-based technology in the writing process. The second writing project followed the same procedures without the use of computer-based technology. The results of the two writing projects were compared to look at the effectiveness of computer-based technology in the writing process. The findings showed that there was minimal difference in student scores between the two writing projects.

Statement of Problem

"Computer-based technology" is perceived as an application of computer software that allows students to manipulate data, encourages problem-solving skills, and creates simulated learning environments through Internet service providers.

"Today's computer-based technologies offer new ways to provide students with direct experience . . . . Through using teaching and learning resources that can be manipulated electronically, technology can extend experience of students far beyond the time and space limitations of conventional materials" (Dyrli and Kinnaman, 1995). Teachers want to use more technology with their students. In our own classrooms, computer-based technology is used to help reinforce grammar skills and writing techniques taught during teacher-directed lessons. Using this type of technology helps students stay current with important grammar and writing components.

After interviewing teachers, parents, and students, we found that many had similar opinions about computer-based learning. Teachers' opinions stated that the use of computer-based learning to enhance grammar skills was highly favored. Parents agreed. Three-fourths of the students interviewed felt computer-based learning suited them best, although one-fourth felt that traditional teaching methods better met their learning expectations. All participants in these interviews agreed that teacher-directed instruction should occur before computer-based learning takes place. Vygotsky states in his 1962 publication *Thought and Language*, "the larger the zone, the better students will learn in school." This emphasizes the idea of "zone of proximal development," or ZPD. Benson (1995) claims that since instruction should precede development, the requisite functions are immature when instruction begins. This statement correlates with the information from the interviews: teacher-directed learning needs to occur before computer-based learning can reinforce grammar concepts.

Teacher-directed learning is important when teaching new grammar or writing concepts. Computer-based learning reinforces the new concepts and presents the material in a "real-world" context.

In our opinion, we feel that teacher-directed learning is important when teaching new grammar or writing concepts. Computer-based learning reinforces the new concepts and presents the material in a "real-world" context. "The important point is that the students do not do their work in isolation; they learn with their peers in a global context. Such strategies . . . improve classroom practice and student learning in a substantial and meaningful way that fosters higher-level thinking, real-world skills, and lifelong learning" (Sherry, 1997). The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between computer instruction and traditional instruction and student growth in writing.

Literature Review

According to Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (1998), there are many best practices and methods to help students reach the goals for writing. All students can write. In order for students to write effectively and with meaning, teachers should use "best practices" as follows: find purpose for

writing; model writing; extend writing across the curriculum; provide strategies for student evaluation; and assess only selected pieces. Some "Best Practice" techniques for effective student writing include the following: student-selected topics; prewriting; drafting; revising and editing; ongoing conferences; peer evaluation; partner interviews; and the use of inventive spelling. Ownership and responsibility is evident through the use of portfolios, student evaluation, and published work.

Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) played a key role in our research. The ZPD allows for maximal learning and development of the learner. This ZPD was used to structure prewriting, drafting, peer editing, revising, and publishing experiences.

Early studies in the area of constructivism generally conclude that "function begins as an interaction between the child and a knowledgeable member of the culture" (Gredler, 1997). As Gredler points out, "contemporary research indicates that several changes take place on the interpersonal level, and each is accompanied by a change on the intrapersonal level." Students need the opportunity to build on prior knowledge in order to understand and construct new knowledge from an authentic experience. An authentic experience includes solving a real-life problem. Solving these problems encourages students to "explore possibilities, invent alternative solutions, collaborate with other students (or external experts), try out ideas and hypotheses, revise their thinking, and finally present the best solution they can derive"(NCREL,1999).

The range between the child's ability to solve problems independently and the need for assistance to solve the problem at a higher potential is the ZPD. Culture, society, and experience influence the zone. Benson (1995) sites, "Vygotsky (1962) claimed that the larger the zone, the better students will learn in school." In order for students to reach a higher potential, communication between the child and adult at the child's level is necessary. This can be done through prompts and questioning, allowing the child to reach the higher level with assistance.

Components of Instruction

Computer-based learning and constructivism are closely linked to learners' ZPD. For instance, computers can be programmed to test various learner zones. "Tests can determine the students' ability to solve problems in a subject independently versus their level with assistance" (Benson, 1995). In problem-solving situations, computers can provide the prompt for learners, helping them to achieve a higher cognitive level. Computer-based learning provides a non-threatening environment for students to interact with each other. Swan and Mitrani (1993) state that " . . . the use of computers will result in schools that are more student-centered and cooperative, and classrooms in which learning is more individualized than in the classrooms of today."

When technology becomes more widely used in classrooms, more student-centered, cooperative classrooms where the teacher is a facilitator . . . will be realized.

Additionally, computer-based learning allows students to become better problem solvers when working within a social environment. Social inequality between the student and the adult instructor can be decreased through the use of computer-based learning. Benson (1995) quotes Vygotsky, ". . . partners should jointly solve problems to bring about cognitive development. The computer can pose problems and prompt students to serve as the advanced partner to aid in problem solving."

Swan and Mitrani (1993) found that student–teacher interactions increased in computer-based classrooms. Learning became more individualized and student centered than in the traditional classroom setting. "We found 17 times more individual interactions between teachers and students than there were in traditional classroom settings" (Swan and Mitrani,1993). These outcomes have been seen in computer-based classrooms. When technology becomes more widely used in classrooms, more student-centered, cooperative classrooms where the teacher is a facilitator will be realized.

The way that writing is being taught is changing because of computer-based technologies. Students have more access to technology both at home and in the school setting. The purpose of student writing has changed due to the increased use of word processing, the Internet, and e-mail. Computer-based writing has become a type of application to manipulate text information. Word processing programs involve a graphic interface in which students recognize pictures or symbols to represent text characteristics.

Langone, Levine, Clees, Malone, & Koorland (1996) devised a quasi-experimental design to study the effects of computer-based word processing versus pencil/paper writing tasks. Six elementary students with learning disabilities focused on the task of writing outside of the regular education classroom. The results indicated that there was little significant difference between the two strategies. However, there were individual differences between the two strategies. The study suggests that the effect of technology depends on the individual. The students in the study preferred using computer based writing versus the paper/pencil task. Limitations of this study included use of older computers without a mouse interface, a two-week time frame, and

no prior knowledge of students' computer skills.

The use of computer-based technology in writing has become widespread. The accessibility of information via the Internet from a home or classroom computer and Web pages created by experts on given topics allows students more authentic and updated resources. The students continually work on their projects, revising and refining to create a complete and polished article or product. "With feedback from the teacher, the students progressively revise and refine their own products until they are ready to hand them in. Products can be prepared with a word processor, using screen captures of photographs, graphics, and quotations (from Web sites) that are then inserted into a written document. Thus, students not only learn to access information from sources all over the globe, they also work through the process of creating and editing a polished, professional article" (Sherry, 1997). This strategy not only helps students improve basic writing skills, it also gives the students ownership of their writing in which they use higher order thinking skills, real world experiences, and lifelong learning.

Guthrie and Richardson (1995) focus on early elementary students and how technology motivates writing. Their findings show that students are intrinsically motivated by computer usage. Not only did student writing improve in both quantity and quality, the lure of being "published" encouraged them to write; students took pride in their finished product. Guthrie and Richardson state that by "publishing [students'] work in a form that looks professional, students were more eager to develop their writing products than if they were only handwriting them." Based on collaboration, peer support, appropriate technical tools, and motivation, teachers were able to construct a learning environment to promote successful writing. This study covers students in kindergarten through grade 2, omitting middle to late elementary. The results were only from the first year of a three-year study. The software used was part of Apple Computer's Early Language Connections series.

Bialo and Solomon (1997) cited a study done by a team at Vanderbilt University on inner city, at-risk kindergartners and the use of computer-based writing. Their finding "showed significantly superior gains in auditory, language, decoding in-context and story composition skills over a control group not using the computer." They referenced a study of Indiana's Buddy System, where computers were placed in the homes of upper elementary students. The findings showed that these students made significant gains in writing proficiency compared to schools without the use of the Buddy System. Because these studies were cited from other studies, there was no additional supporting information.

In order for students to become lifelong learners, they must possess the skills of communication, collaboration, creative problem solving, and technological fluency.

In reviewing the increasing role of technology in the learning environment, Hoskinson (1998) states that technology increases the productivity of learners by allowing them to create final products in a shorter amount of time. The Secretary of Labor's Commissions on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Report (Hoskinson, 1998) identifies using technology as one of the five critical competencies required to be competitive in a global economy. Teachers need not only be able to use technology, but they must be able to teach it so students can apply technology skills to their learning.

In order for students to become lifelong learners, they must possess the skills of communication, collaboration, creative problem solving, and technological fluency. Thornburg (1998) states, "Larry Irving, assistant secretary of commerce, has suggested that 60 percent of the jobs available at the turn of the century will require skills currently held by only 20 percent of today's workforce . . . ."

The future workforce for today's learners will have tougher requirements than ever before. What is assessed in schools today is not addressing the skills required for the twenty-first century. According to NCREL (1998), the workforce needs "citizens who can think critically and strategically to solve problems." To establish a clear vision of the goals students need, educators first need to look at the learning environment itself. NCREL (1998) cites Barbara Means of SRI International, who identifies seven variables that, "when present in the classroom, indicate that effective teaching and learning are occurring." They are:

- Children are engaged in authentic and multidisciplinary tasks.
- Assessments are based on students' performance of real tasks.
- Students participate in interactive modes of instruction.
- Students work collaboratively.
- Students are grouped heterogeneously.
- The teacher is a facilitator in learning.
- Students learn through exploration.

Technology is the tool that links these seven variables together. When integrated with each other, the student is submersed into an engaged learning environment.

If educators are to prepare students for success in the new millennium, it is imperative that learners are engaged in a technology-enriched learning environment. "Best practices" for writing must incorporate national goals and state standards for language arts and technology. By

engaging learners through the use of these goals, standards, and practices, educators allow students to work collaboratively, communicating with each other and the teacher to attain their highest potential. Vygotsky's theory of ZPD reinforces this statement of engaged learning and the use of technology as a learning tool.

The purpose of our research project is to examine the relationship between computer instruction and traditional instruction and student growth in writing, using some of the above-mentioned components. These strategies will be used with the learners in fourth and sixth grades at Olson Park Elementary to assess the effectiveness of technology in the writing process.

By integrating these goals, standards, and practices in the fourth- and sixth-grade writing curriculum at Olson Park Elementary, the students participated in two different writing experiences. The first writing experience included prewriting, drafting, peer and teacher editing, revising, and publishing with the use of computer technology. The second writing experience used the same techniques without the use of computer technology. The computer technology was replaced with the traditional pencil and paper technique, along with small group instruction.

Design and Methodology

The focus of the Harlem School District #122 for the past decade has been on the use of instructional technology to improve writing scores in IGAP testing. There has been no formal study on the relationship between technology-based writing and traditional methods within the district. We conducted a study to investigate the correlation between student writing scores and the use of computer-based writing skills. The main emphasis was on grammar, spelling, and writing mechanics. The research was conducted in two intermediate grade levels: fourth and sixth. The computer-based instructional programs and teacher-directed instruction were based on grade-level appropriateness.

All students were included from three specific classrooms with three different teachers. The total number of students participating in this study was 65. In the two fourth-grade classes, there were a total of 41 students—21 boys and 20 girls. In the sixth-grade class, there were 24 students—11 boys and 13 girls. Within this sample, there were 7 students identified with special needs (5 in fourth grade, 2 in sixth grade). In fourth grade, 4 students had academic IEPs (Individualized Education Plan), and 2 students had IEPs in the area of speech. In sixth grade, both students had academic IEPs. In the first and second writing projects, there were 2 fourth-grade IEP students who participated in this study but were exempt from the scoring. There were no gifted students who participated in this study. There were 2 students in fourth grade and 1 in sixth grade identified as ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder).

By engaging learners through the use of these goals, standards, and practices, educators allow students to work collaboratively, communicating with each other and the teacher to attain their highest potential.

Olson Park Elementary School is located in a middle class northern Illinois suburban setting. The racial/ethnic background of Olson Park is as follows: White, 91.5%; Black 3.9%; Hispanic 2.1%; Asian/Pacific Islander 2.3%; Native American 0.2%. Eighty-three percent of the students at Olson Park had computers at home.

The building structure is based on open classrooms, which promotes a cooperative learning environment between students and teachers. Olson Park School was designed in the 1970s with classrooms designed in a pod configuration. In fourth grade, two sections of the three fourth-grade classes shared a common space. The third fourth-grade class partially joined the other two classes by an open wall space. Only two of the three fourth-grade classes participated in the study. The three sixth-grade classes all shared a common space, in line with their open concept; however, each class had a short wall division between homerooms. Only one of the three sixth-grade classes participated in the study. All grade levels within the building are technology-enhanced classrooms equipped with six networked PCs, located on the side of each classroom. Student centers and rotation-based work are the focus of these learning environments.

In fourth grade, students were placed heterogeneously and randomly into groups of five or six students by arranging student desks together. The computers were placed along the interior classroom wall in the double fourth-grade classroom. In the adjoining fourth grade, the computers were placed on the opposite side of this wall. These classrooms had no windows or doors, and did not typify the traditional "four walls" configuration. Each classroom was carpeted and air-conditioned, and was illuminated using standard fluorescent ceiling lights. In all three fourth-grade areas, bulletin board space was at a minimum, and the interior walls had cork strips for hanging student work. Each fourth-grade area also had a standard blackboard, overhead screen, and overhead projector.

In sixth grade, students were placed heterogeneously and randomly into groups of five or six students by seating them at rectangular tables. The students had crates under their chairs in which to keep all supplies and books. The computers for all three sixth-grade classes were placed along the interior wall of two classrooms, as well as along the partial

wall between two of the three classrooms. These classrooms had no windows, but one did have a door from the learning center area. In all three sixth-grade classrooms, there was no bulletin board space; however, there were temporary walls on which items could be stapled. Each sixth-grade area had a dry erase board, and the class that participated in the study had an overhead projector and screen.

Procedure

Before beginning the actual project, parent and student surveys on computer use outside of the school setting were administered during parent-teacher conferences. Parents were asked during parent-teacher conference time to complete the survey and leave it in a designated area. Fourth-grade parents completed and returned 78% of the surveys. Sixth-grade parents returned 100% of the surveys. The purpose of the parent survey was to determine the attitude toward technology. Some examples of the survey questions were: What is the main purpose for using your computer at work or at home? If you were given the task of learning a new skill or concept, and were given your choice, would you rather [choices given]? What types of technology help you learn most effectively [choices given]?

The purpose of the student survey was to determine technology usage outside of the school setting. These surveys were completed during the first full month of school, September, 1998. In fourth and sixth grades, 100% of the surveys were completed and returned.

Following the surveys, the first writing project was started. This project was done with the use of computer software called *Writing to Write*, as well as teacher direction. *Writing to Write* is a computer software package produced by IBM and marketed for school use. "The *Writing to Write* program provides a stimulating environment where children can practice and refine language arts skills —listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and the *Writing to Write* unit objectives provide a focal point for interdisciplinary learning" (Martin, 1992). The *Writing to Write* process is carried out through four center-based learning areas. The four centers include reading, creative writing, computer, and work journal.

The reading station, Wreaders, involves the students reading an integrated novel that correlates with the writing skills being taught. For creative writing, students worked at the Wrinker center, which combines writing and creative thinking activities. The third center is a student work journal, which provides students independent practice with grammar skills. In fourth grade, the grammar skill addressed was, "How can I tell one from the other?" In sixth grade, the grammar skill addressed was, "What concept am I thinking of, and how can I explain it with associations and examples?" At the computer, students worked on developing a paper following a prescribed format on an assigned topic. The above format correlates with the first study of our project. Each of the four centers will be described as they are done in fourth and sixth grades, beginning with the Wreader.

Parent and student surveys on computer use outside of the school setting were administered . . . The purpose of the parent survey was to determine the attitude toward technology . . . The purpose of the student survey was to determine technology usage outside of the school setting.

The Wreader Center. In the Wreader center, students are given a novel to read that correlates with the language skill being addressed in the unit. In fourth grade, the nonfiction book *Frogs, Toads, Lizards, and Salamanders*, by Nancy Winslow Parker and Joan Richards Wright, was read. In sixth grade, the novel *Journey to America*, by Sonia Levitin, was read. In fourth grade, the language skill being addressed was comparisons. In sixth grade, the language skill being addressed was renaming nouns. Students read with a partner during the center time and filled out a "reader sheet" after each chapter. Several pages in the student work journal also addressed the reading novel.

The Wrinker Center. The Wrinker center provided students with different prompts for creative writing/illustrating. Students worked on several of these prompts during the unit. In fourth grade, one example was "Which Superhero?" in which students had to describe two different types of superheroes that they had met at a party. In sixth grade, one example was "Current Events," in which the students had to generalize what their home would be like without electricity.

The Student Work Journal. The Student Work Journal provided students with different skills: in fourth grade, a student might be asked to compare and contrast an identified object (tree) from two perspectives, distant and close up; in sixth grade, students could write quotations that reflect what given concepts mean. These skills all related to the unit topic. Students completed Work Journal pages assigned by the classroom teacher during the course of the unit. This allowed all students to address the same skill at the same time.

The Computer Center. The Computer center is made up of two components. The first involves the students working with a partner to complete a paper that incorporates the skills being addressed in the unit. Students began by brainstorming a list of subject-related words and typing them into the *Writing to Write* program. When the list was completed, students used their generated list to outline a paper. This outline was

called the Rehearsal Planner. The next step for the students was the writing of the rehearsal draft. This process prepared them for the individual writing project following the same steps. The classroom teacher assigned the individual writing project topic. In fourth grade, the topic was comparing school pizza and pizzeria pizza, and in sixth grade, the topic focused on using different ways to explain teamwork and cooperation.

The second writing project followed the same steps for the Wreaders, Wrinkers, and the Student Work Journal. The writing process followed the same procedures as the first writing project; however, it was done without the use of computer software. Instead, it was completed using teacher direction and traditional writing methods, such as pencil and paper. This writing process followed the same format as the *Writing to Write* format. The topic of the paper for fourth grade focused on the skill of linking verbs. The students wrote their final paper on animal facts of their own choice. In sixth grade, the skill covered was on organizing facts. The students were divided into four groups and they were assigned one of the following topics: Mummification, Pharaohs, the Nile River, and Pyramids. The students were given one of the following generalizations: the process of mummification; the life of a Pharaoh; journey on the Nile; and the importance of the pyramids to the Egyptian people. Working on their own, students researched their topics by taking notes, making an outline, and organizing their facts in a sequential order.

The only difference between the technology-based writing project and the traditional writing project was the use of computer software in the writing process. The computer software guided the students at the computer and allowed them to use word processing skills to complete the first writing project. The second writing project followed the same process but did not use any word processing; instead, it used teacher-direction and pencil and paper to complete the writing project.

Assessment

The measures of assessment used for this study were parent and student surveys, informal observations, student writing samples, and a writing rubric. The parent surveys were comprised of both multiple-choice and ranking responses. The data from the parent surveys was compiled to determine attitude toward technology and learning. The student surveys were comprised of multiple-choice responses. The data from the student surveys was compiled to determine student use of computers outside of the classroom as well as determination of favorite subject areas. Each writing sample, computer-generated and traditional, was scored using the same rubric. The rubric consisted of four categories: correct sentence structure, spelling, writing mechanics, and paragraph format.

The only difference between the technology-based writing project and the traditional writing project was the use of computer software in the writing process.

Informal observations by teachers were done during each *Writing to Write* session. Two full sets of rotations were done weekly. One rotation completes all four components of the *Writing to Write* process. Two days were needed to complete one rotation. During student rotations, the teachers observed students in each center, providing assistance to students as needed. Teachers looked for students to remain on task and focused on the center activity. Students were expected to complete specific assignments at each center. At the end of each center, student work was spot checked and initialed by the teacher for progress. In the Wreader, Wrinker, and Work Journal centers, all incomplete work was sent home as homework.

Student writing samples were collected for a portfolio, which was kept for the duration of the school year. These writing samples were scored using the rubric, which looked at correct sentence structure, spelling, writing mechanics, and paragraph format. Scores from both writing projects were then compared in an effort to determine any differences in score as a result of using technology.

The ideal paper for fourth grade would have had three paragraphs with a minimum of five sentences in each paragraph. An ideal paper for sixth grade would have had five paragraphs with a minimum of five sentences in each paragraph. The scoring for all four components for both fourth and sixth grade was as follows: Excellent (5 points) 0–3 mistakes; Above average (4 points) 4–6 mistakes; Average (3 points) 7–8 mistakes; Needs improvement (2 points) 9–10 mistakes; and Poor (1 point) 11 or more mistakes.

The three teachers involved in this study read and scored each student's paper individually at the end of the writing unit. Each of the two units took six weeks to complete. Student scores were compared at the end of the second unit to determine whether the use of technology lowered the frequency of mistakes in each of the four components. Comparing the percentage score for both papers for each student made this determination.

Data Analysis

The parent surveys were used to determine parental attitude toward technology. The information collected from the parent surveys showed the percentage of computers used at home by fourth- and sixth-grade students. The survey was also used to determine how parents were using

computers at home and at work and how that might reflect on student use at home. This survey was comprised of multiple-choice questions. The additional two questions on the survey, one being multiple choice and the other ranking, addressed learning styles of adults and how those learning styles might affect student learning. The multiple-choice question was broken down into percentages through the use of tallies. The other question was ranked from most effective way of learning to least effective way of learning. The three choices given were audio, computer, and TV/VCR.

The student survey was developed to identify any gender differences in the use of technology at home. It also addressed gender differences toward strengths in academic areas. This survey was comprised of yes/no and multiple-choice questions (i.e., Do you have a computer at home? What one subject are you best at? How often do you use your computer at home?). It was scored by looking at percentages of students who used computers at home and also compared percentages of preferred subject areas for both genders.

The *Writing to Write* process covers many skills in addition to those covered in this study. This study was designed to assess spelling, punctuation, writing mechanics, and paper format. The same rubric was used for both writing samples. Students' scores were compared between the two writing projects. The results for all three components follow.

Parent Surveys

The results of the parent surveys were as follows:

Question 1: "Do you own a computer at home?" Response choices were, "yes" or "no." The results show that 76% of the families owned a computer at home. This percentage represents 41 out of 54 families who completed surveys.

Question 2: "Do you use a computer at work?" Response choices were, "yes" or "no." Total number of responses differs due to the fact that one parent responded both yes and no to using a computer at work. The results show that 81% of the parents who completed the survey used a computer at work.

Question 3: "What is the main purpose for using your computer at work or at home?" Parents responded that "personal use" of computers was the first choice, educational purposes was second. Reference and entertainment had equal ranking.

Question 4: "If you were given the task of learning a new skill or concept, would you rather (choose one): read a manual, research at a library, use computer technology, collaborate with a colleague, or other." The results showed a significant trend toward using a computer to learn a new skill.

Teachers acted as facilitators and guides to the students as they worked in each rotation. In addition, teachers looked for students to remain on task and focused on the center activity.

Question 5: "What types of technology help you learn most effectively?" Parents were asked to rank from 1–3, with 1 being the most effective. Choices given were audio, computer, and TV/VCR. The results show that the number one preference for learning a new skill was the computer, second was TV/VCR, and third was the use of audio.

Student Surveys

The student surveys were combined from fourth and sixth grades. The results show that gender did not have a significant impact on responses; results by gender are given in parentheses.

Question 1: "Do you have a computer at home?" Choices given were, "yes" and "no." The results show that out of 63 students, 79% had access to a home computer. (Boys: 80%; Girls: 93%)

Question 2: "What *one* subject area are you best at?" Choices given were, "science," "social studies," "math," "reading," and "language arts." The overwhelming majority said they were best in math. (Boys: 70%; Girls: 52%)

Question 3: "How often do you use your computer at home?" Choices given were "0–1 times per week," "2–3 times per week," "4–5 times per week," and "6–7 times per week." The results show that 33% of the students used a computer at home 0–1 times per week, compared to 18% of students who used a computer at home 6–7 times per week. The difference between these two categories was the most significant for this question. (Boys: significant difference between the 6–7 times per week category for boys and that for the overall data; Girls: no significant difference between the 0–1, 2–3, 4–5 times per week, but a significant decrease in the use of computers 6–7 times per week, which also represented a lower percentage than this category in the overall data.)

Informal Observations

No data was collected on the informal observations done during the two writing projects. During student rotations, the teachers observed students in each center, providing assistance to students as needed. Teachers acted as facilitators and guides to the students as they worked in each rotation. In addition, teachers looked for students to remain on task and focused on the center activity. Specific assignments were given at the beginning of each center for student work to be completed. At the end of each center, student work was spot checked and initialed by teacher for progress. In the Wreader, Wrinker, and Work Journal centers, all incomplete work was sent home as homework.

Student Writing Samples

The students were graded on a rubric in the following areas: sentence structure, correct spelling, writing mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, and indented paragraphs), and a five-paragraph structure (introductory, three-body, and concluding paragraph). This rubric was scored on a 20-point scale, with a possible five points for each category. The point scale for this writing project for both fourth and sixth grades was as follows: 20–18 points received an A; 17–16 points received a B; 15–14 points received a C; 13–12 points received a D; 11 points or below received an F. The grading scale for both fourth and sixth grades was as follows: 100–90% equals an A; 89–80% equals a B; 79–70% equals a C; 69–60% equals a D; below 59% equals an F.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, scores for the computer writing sample were as follows: for all students participating, an average of 84.4% or a B was scored on the computer writing project, and an average of 87.3% or a B+ was scored on the pencil/paper writing project. The scores were broken down into genders with the following results: On the computer writing project, boys received an average of 88.2% or a B+, and girls received an average of 85% or a B. In the pencil/paper writing project, girls received an average of 88% or a B+, and boys received an average of 86.1% or a B. The summary of fourth grade concludes that the boys scored higher on the computer writing project, and that girls scored higher on the pencil/paper writing project. However, the ±2% between the two writing project scores was not significant.

Sixth Grade

In sixth grade, scores for the computer writing sample were as follows: for all students participating, an average of 91% or an A- was scored on the computer writing project, and an average of 90.4% or an A- was scored on the pencil/paper writing project. The scores were broken down into genders with the following results: On the computer writing project, boys received an average of 90.4% or an A-, and girls received an average 91% or an A-. In the pencil/paper writing project, boys received an average of 90% or an A-, and girls received an average of 91% or an A-.

The summary of sixth grade concludes that the girls scored higher on both writing projects. However, the ±1% between the two writing project scores was not significant.

Combined Fourth and Sixth Grades

In fourth and sixth grades, combined scores for the computer writing sample were as follows: for all students participating, an average of 88% or a B+ was scored on the computer writing project, and an average of 89% or a B+ was scored on the pencil/paper writing project. The scores were broken down into genders resulting in the following: Boys received an average of 89% or a B+ in the computer writing project, and girls received an average of 88% or a B+ in the computer writing project. In the pencil/paper writing project, boys received an average of 89% or a B+, and girls received an average of 89% or a B+. The summary of the overall findings between fourth and sixth grades shows that boys scored higher than the girls on the computer writing project and the boys and girls scored the same on the pencil/paper writing project. However, the ±1% was not significant in either writing project.

> ***"Students not only learn to access information from sources all over the globe; they also work through the process of creating and editing a polished, professional article."***

Summary and Discussion of Findings

Does computer-based technology enhance academic writing performance in the areas of sentence structure, spelling, and writing mechanics? This was the question that drove our research and data when working with fourth- and sixth-grade students. The Harlem School District has a strong emphasis on the use of technology in classroom instruction. The purpose of this study was to look at the difference between student scores using computer-based writing and the traditional pencil/paper writing process.

Districtwide, writing is assessed through the use of state standardized testing (ISAT). The Harlem District does not have a standard writing assessment for teachers to follow. Instead, each teacher creates his or her own criteria and assessment for student writing. The *Writing to Write* program was intended as a uniform method of writing across the district, but teachers questioned its effectiveness compared to the traditional pencil/paper writing methods. This study was conducted to compare the results of the two writing methods.

Finding 1: Parent Survey

Parent survey responses to question 4 ("If you were given the task of learning a new skill or concept, and were given your choice, would you rather . . . .") showed that 55% would choose computer technology for learning a new skill or concept. This finding confirmed our anticipated results because the percentage of parents owning a computer at home was at 76%.

The way that writing is being taught is changing because of computer-based technologies. The increased usage of word processing and student-assisted writing software packages encourages students to compose while at the computer, and software identifies spelling and grammatical errors during the writ-

ing process. This has changed from the traditional pencil/paper writing method where students write, proofread, edit, and revise. Students have more access to technology both at home and in the school setting. The purpose of student writing has changed due to the increased use of word processing, the Internet, and e-mail. Computer-based writing has become a type of application to manipulate text information. Word processing programs involve a graphic interface in which students recognize pictures or symbols to represent text characteristics.

Finding 2: Student Surveys
The student surveys showed that 79% of the fourth- and sixth-grade students have computers at home. Out of this 79%, 84% of the students used a computer between 2 and 7 times per week at home. The survey did not ask for specific uses of the computer. In the Harlem School District, computer-based technology is being more widely used throughout the writing process. Specifically, at Olson Park School, computer technology used for writing is incorporated into the daily curriculum. Widespread availability of home and school computers has given students access to the Internet and Web pages created by experts on almost any topic, offering them more authentic and updated resources. The students continually work on their projects, revising and refining to create a complete and polished article or product. "With feedback from the teacher, the students progressively revise and refine their own products until they are ready to hand them in. Products can be prepared with a word processor using screen captures of photographs, graphics, and quotations (from Web sites) that are then inserted into a written document. Thus, students not only learn to access information from sources all over the globe; they also work through the process of creating and editing a polished, professional article" (Sherry, 1997). This strategy not only improves basic writing skills, it also gives students ownership of their writing as they use higher order thinking skills, real-world experiences, and lifelong learning.

Finding 3: No Difference between Groups
The findings of this project showed no significant difference (±1%) between the scores of the computer writing project and the pencil/paper writing project in both fourth and sixth grades. We believe this shows that there is really very little difference between the two writing processes. They adhere to the same methods, but the pencil/paper writing is handwritten and teacher-directed whereas the *Writing to Write* program is typewritten and computer-directed.

During the course of the study, the three teachers involved met before and after each component to communicate methods and findings. An effort was made to ensure the consistency of methods for each component.

Langone, Levine, Clees, Malone, & Koorland (1996) devised a quasi-experimental design to study the effects of computer-based word processing versus pencil/paper writing tasks. Six elementary students with learning disabilities focused on the task of writing outside of the regular education classroom. The results indicated that there was little significant difference between the two strategies. However, there were individual differences between the two strategies. The study suggests that the effect of technology depends on the individual. The students in the study preferred using computer-based writing versus the paper/pencil task. Limitations of this study included use of older computers without a mouse interface, a two-week time frame, and no prior knowledge of students' computer skills.

Finding 4: Informal Observations
The informal observations revealed no findings. However, students were monitored to ensure they remained on task and their questions were answered. This was true for both the pencil/paper and computer writing methods.

Call for Manuscripts

ELQ is seeking manuscripts for the April 2002 issue on "Teachers as Researchers." In *Writing for Professional Publication* (1999), Henson writes, "The concept of classroom teachers as researchers is not new" (p. 288). In fact, he continues, in 1910 "the topic appeared in a professional journal." Unfortunately, even today many have trouble thinking of "practicing" teachers as researchers. Yet, in classrooms every day, teachers search for solutions to problems, and often, they do this systematically. Still, teachers tend to keep their findings to themselves. Isn't it time to share? What research stories could teachers tell? What kinds of inquiries do teachers undertake? What does *action* research mean to classroom teachers? What research studies do teachers read? What books do teachers read about research? What attitudes do teachers and researchers have toward one another? Who benefits from research in classrooms? How do teachers carry out their research projects? Submission deadline is **December 30, 2001**.

Computer-based learning provides a nonthreatening environment in which students may interact with each other. Swan and Mitrani (1993) state that ". . . the use of computers will result in schools that are more student-centered and cooperative, and classrooms in which learning is more individualized than in the classrooms of today."

The three classrooms in this study used center-based, cooperative learning and computer technology, which creates a nonthreatening environment for students. Students are encouraged to work in groups, peer consult, and peer edit. The teachers in these three classrooms take on the role of facilitator, guiding the students through their learning experiences.

Project Limitations

Limitations of this study included longevity and number of writing samples in each project, number of grade levels involved, number of schools involved, student computer skills, and school socioeconomic background. This 18-week study covered only two writing units: the first was the computer writing project (which was also the first writing project of the school year, raising the question of whether the students had enough time to re-acclimate themselves to the writing process); the second was the pencil/paper project, which immediately followed the first writing project. Only one writing project for each method was administered and included in this study. Had this study been extended to include an additional sample for each method, the results may have been different.

The number of grade levels involved in this project was not representative of the number of grade levels at Olson Park School. In addition, only one of the three sections of sixth grade was involved in this study. Only two of the three fourth-grade sections were involved in this study. Had all sections of these two grade levels been involved in the study, the results may have differed. In addition, if all grade levels at Olson Park had been involved in the study, the results may have been different.

The Harlem School District currently has nine elementary schools. Each building has access to the *Writing to Write* program. There has not been a districtwide study conducted on the effectiveness of using the *Writing to Write* program.

Student computer skills may have altered the results of the computer-based writing project. In the Harlem School District, there is no formal keyboarding instruction included in the curriculum. Students have different keyboarding ability levels that could have helped or hindered the results of the study.

The three classrooms in this study used center-based, cooperative learning and computer technology, which creates a nonthreatening environment for students.

Olson Park School has an upper middle class socioeconomic background, which is evident in the high percentage of computers at home. Conducting this study in schools with a lower socioeconomic background, where a smaller percentage of computers at home would be likely, may also have changed the results.

Future Directions

As a result of this study, the three teachers involved have begun to conduct additional studies concentrating in the areas of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and student motivation with the use of computer technology. Each component will be scrupulously examined to identify correlation between the use of technology and the writing process.

Future studies could include all elementary buildings in the Harlem School District. Longevity could be extended to include long-term tracking of students. For example, one group of students could be followed from kindergarten through sixth grade. By increasing the sample population and/or length of the study, more data would be available to make inferences about the effectiveness of technology and the writing process. ●

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Executive Committee Meets in Milwaukee

Rick Chambers, Chair, CEL

Luncheon
The Sunday luncheon featured Donaldo Macedo, University of Massachusetts. Macedo challenged listeners to rethink concepts of multiculturalism "toward a humanizing pedagogy."

Henry Kiernan presented the annual award for best article to Rebecca Bowers Sipe for "Innovations with Staying Power: Creating a Climate for Change." Louann Reid presented the new CEL Award for Exemplary Leadership to Jim Burke of California, recognized for leadership through teaching, publications, and the national listserv CATE-Net.

Convention
Program Chair Judith Kelly organized "Leadership Matters." Convention speakers Victor Villaneuva, Jr., Miriam Chaplin, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Patricia Breivik, and Luis "Tony" Baez informed, entertained, and reminded participants of the responsibilities and joys of leadership. Breakout sessions represented a range of issues, and roundtable sessions on high-stakes testing, charter schools, and merit pay provided forums for discussion.

New Board Members
Elected were Associate Chair Rudy Sharpe, and Members-at-Large Jennifer Abrams and David Noskin. Appointed were Associate Nominations Chair Wanda Porter, Atlanta 2002 Program Chair Lela DeToye, and Nina Bono in a new position as CEL Booth Manager. Secretary Bil Chinn and Membership Chair Jolene Borgese were reappointed for two-year terms.

Business Meetings
We focused on initiatives from the summer retreat in Colorado—a vision statement, member recruitment and retention, member services, and the annual convention. Feedback from various constituencies was incorporated into the vision statement, now posted on the Web site (www.coedu.usf.edu/cel).

Board members will telephone or e-mail new CEL members to establish personal contact. We will use *ELQ*, CEL-talk, the Web site, and a proposed online journal as forums for discussion. Other initiatives include creation of a speakers' bureau, identification of CEL members in NCTE affiliates, and CEL board members' making presentations at other educational conferences.

Looking Ahead

Publications
The April issue of *ELQ* is Henry Kiernan's last. His work has been diligent, creative, and timely. Henry has performed this voluntary assignment with good humor and outstanding judgment. Bonita Wilcox of Duquesne University is the new editor.

Kiernan will edit the second CEL monograph, *The Mentoring Guide: Issues in Developing New Teachers and Leaders*. Contributors should see the CEL Web site (www.coedu.usf.edu/cel) for more information or contact him at kiernan@nac.net.

Program 2001
Bernice Spearman-Thompkins announced the theme and distributed program proposals for the 2001 convention. Proposal forms for "Re-creating the Classroom" are available on the Web site.

Leadership Award
Contact Louann Reid at Louann.Reid@colostate.edu with nominations for the 2001 CEL Award for Exemplary Leadership.

NCTE Spring Conference
CEL-sponsored sessions run throughout the conference, March 28–31, 2001. On Wednesday, CEL co-hosts, with the Secondary Section, a day-long workshop called "Secondary Readers Reading Successfully." Thursday afternoon roundtable discussions with Lela DeToye, Jeff Golub, Carol Jago, Bob Infantino, and Ruth Vinz feature topics of interest to leaders. The CEL social is Friday evening, and Saturday morning, Jeff Golub, Jim Strickland, and Jeff Wilhelm host "How Technology Is Changing English Instruction."

Involvement
We invite you to join conversations on CEL-talk about leadership. Sign up from the NCTE homepage. Program proposals for Baltimore and the spring conference in 2002 in Portland are still welcome. If you have suggestions to assist us in our planning, contact me at rchambers@oct.on.ca. ○

Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

October 2001 (deadline June 15, 2001)
All about Journaling

February 2002 (deadline October 15, 2001)
Alternative Assessment

April 2002 (deadline December 30, 2001)
Teachers as Researchers (see call, p.13)

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Bonita Wilcox at Miller Research Learning Center, Room 111, Edinboro, PA 16444; e-mail: bwilcox@ edinboro.edu; phone: (814) 398-2528. ●

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